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THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN 1905 - 1920

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

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in the

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University of Saskatchewan

by

Walter Joseph Carl Cherwinski

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN
1905 - 1920

April 27, 1966

This is to certify that Walter Joseph Carl Cherwinski, having completed the prescribed course of study and presented a satisfactory thesis, has fulfilled all the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Thesis subject: "The Formative Years of the Trade Union Movement in Saskatchewan, 1905 - 1920."

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.F.L.	American Federation of Labor
A.O.U.W.	Ancient Order of United Workmen
B.L.F.E.	Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen
B. & M.I.U.	Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union
Bureau of Labor Report	Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture: Bureau of Labour Report
C.A.R.	Canadian Annual Review
I.T.U.	International Typographical Union
I.W.W.	Industrial Workers of the World
O.B.U.	One Big Union
Proceedings	Reports of the Proceedings of the Annual Conventions of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada
Report on Labor Organization	Department of Labour Report on Labour Organization in Canada
R.T. & L.C.	Regina Trades and Labor Council
S.G.G.A.	Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association
T.L.C.	Trades and Labor Congress of Canada
U.B. of C. & J.	United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners
U.M.W.	United Mine Workers
W.C.T.U.	Women's Christian Temperance Union
W.F.M.	Western Federation of Miners

INTRODUCTION

The choice of the years 1905 to 1919 as the formative years of the trade union movement in Saskatchewan was by no means arbitrary. The year 1905 marked the formation of the first permanent, non-railway local union. The intervening years until 1919 were years of further formation and consolidation, of recognition and entrenchment, of expansion and demise, of hope and of failure. The fifteen years in question were the heyday of the craft unions, and more specifically of the building trades which expanded to meet the demands of a new and rapidly developing province. Like the people of the province, generally these unions expressed great optimism for the future. At times their expansion showed a distinct lack of rhyme or reason, but then no one was overly concerned with caution. Besides, there was no reason to be cautious when crops were good and there was an ever-increasing number of acres from which these crops could be gleaned. Only with the war was this optimistic speculation checked; only then did organized labour realize that security was an obscure quantity, quick to disappear, and that the position of the workingman had to be bolstered by means which were at variance with the established order. The upheaval of 1919 which resulted produced a Thermidorean reaction, the legacy of which had its effects throughout the 1920's and even into the 1930's.

Although the general outlines of the period are well known, certain distinct problems were encountered in attempting to fill in the details, the main problem being an inadequacy of source material for the whole province. As with most organizations that do not create a bureaucracy, there was no real concern for the preservation of records,

although those that were preserved are of excellent quality. Also, because the office space occupied by local unions was at best limited, most records were destroyed in time. Others, such as the records of the Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council, were destroyed by fire. However, by the hand of chance some primary source material was obtained, the most valuable being that of the Regina Trades and Labor Council, which include complete minutes and some correspondence. By supplementing this with government records and newspaper accounts a reasonably comprehensive picture of the activities of organized labour in the capital city has been constructed. However, because this study attempts to deal with the province as a whole it was necessary to speculate that the opinions expressed by labour in Regina were, for all intents and purposes, the same as those in Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert. That this was probably so is suggested by several factors. Because no large, well-developed union centre predominated in the province, as Winnipeg did in Manitoba, no one city took the lead in the moulding of attitudes and all four Saskatchewan union centres had to look elsewhere for inspiration. As well, all unions in the province were at the same stage of development and almost all had their bases in the building trades. This gave a uniformity of thought and expression. Only Moose Jaw differed in this respect because of the large number of railway unions in that city, and the results of this have been noted where possible.

The organization of workers in Saskatchewan was accomplished within a unique setting which was different from any other province in Canada. This uniqueness arose in part from the formative influences of the movement in the province. Almost all organization was instigated from outside

the province. This was usually accomplished by American organizers and the unions, when established, were affiliated with American organizations. However, in most cases they proved to be a financial liability to the parent body, and were only allowed to continue in order to maintain the principle of unionism.

Most of this early organization was accomplished among craftsmen who had come to the province from the United Kingdom. This tended to instill a hybrid quality into Saskatchewan unionism, with its American structure, because these individuals had brought with them the ideas and ideals of British unionism. Although this hybrid quality was evident elsewhere on the prairies it was more pronounced in Saskatchewan because the emigration of the craftsmen from the British Isles was in response to the need to develop a province. In turn, the organization drives by American internationals were motivated by the desire for organization by these artizans. There was little time for one tradition to mellow before another was accepted. Some branches of British unions were also established (such as the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners) but these were usually shortlived,[1] becoming incorporated into their American counterparts in order to benefit from the superior service offered by the American internationals.[2] Unions which were

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1. In the case of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners none of the locals established in Saskatchewan lasted beyond 1924 and all were faced with the problem of declining membership almost from the moment of their inception. This information was provided by Dr. Eugene Forsey.

2. The word "service" in labour terminology refers to the paid organizer or representative, provided by most American internationals, who attends local meetings periodically, helps negotiate new contracts and aids the local or locals in the event of difficulty.

organized on an independent basis or with a strictly Canadian affiliation usually suffered the same fate.

The geography of Saskatchewan also tended to make her unionists unique. The basis of life in the province has always been the soil and the urban areas which developed performed primarily the task of servicing the agricultural community. As a result, there grew up an unusual feeling of harmony between the farmer and the urban worker, based on mutual dependence. This situation was unique among the prairie provinces. The farming community could be termed a formative influence on Saskatchewan labour in that it instilled a feeling of moderation in the latter. Also, the fact that the urban centre could grow only as fast as the area it served meant that a specific town or city could not predominate, as was the case with Winnipeg in Manitoba. Instead, a number of smaller centres such as Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon were established, thus separating the province's unions. This physical separation was to have a telling effect on the development of the trade union movement.

Another significant feature of the formative years of organized labour in Saskatchewan was its late development because of the late development of the province in comparison with the other prairie provinces. Therefore, the first fifteen years were characterized by the ascendency of the building trades because the construction industry was basic to the early development of the province. This provided a much needed element of unity. However, the initiation of new schemes of organization in more advanced areas, such as through industrial unions, was delayed because there was little need for these.

For prairie people to band together into organizations for various reasons was a natural occurrence in the face of geographic isolation, and by the sheer right of seniority the farmers were the first to form organizations. One such body was the North West Farmers Union, first convened in December, 1883, and its main raison d'etre was to discuss certain grievances common to its members. Other organizations, such as those established under the provisions of the North West Territories Ordinance No. 17 of 1890, approached in design some of the aims of early unionism. Under this ordinance such associations as the Grenfell Mechanics and Literary Institute were founded to act as open forums for debate of current and philosophical questions.

Another early organization called the Ancient Order of United Workmen also provided an open forum for its members. The first lodge was established in Qu'Appelle in 1892 and its primary purpose was "to endeavor to improve the moral, intellectual and social conditions of the members, and by wholseome /sic/ precepts and fraternal admonitions to inspire a due appreciation of the realities and responsibilities of life." In order to promote the moral betterment of its members the Ancient Order endeavoured to "hold lectures, read essays, discuss all new inventions and improvements, encourage research in art, science, and literature, and when practicable, to establish and maintain libraries...."[3]

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3. Government of Saskatchewan, Provincial Secretary's Office, file No. 2588, "Constitution of the Supreme Lodge, A.O.U.W." The Supreme Lodge of the A.O.U.W. was originally incorporated in 1873 under an act of the Kentucky legislature. At the request of the lodge the charter was annulled in 1886 and it was reincorporated under the laws of the State of Texas in January, 1902. In the interim it continued without formal incorporation. M. W. Sackett (Supreme Recorder) to Territorial Secretary, May 31, 1905.

These activities the early unions also attempted to provide. One other feature of the Ancient Order brought it very close to the constitution of early unions, namely, the provision of mutual sickness and death benefits for its members. However, the name of the Ancient Order of United Workmen was deceptive. Although it was open "to all white male persons, regardless of nationality, political preference or denominational distinction" it was merely a fraternal society with a complicated ritual tailored for the "better" elements of prairie society.

An equally deceptive title was that of the Patrons of Industry, which formed its first county associations in the Northwest Territories during the 1890's. Although its main objective was "to secure the rights and interests of agriculturists and laborers,"[4] its main concern was with the interests of the farmer, as witness the fact that the main irritant for the Patrons was the high tariff policy of the federal government.[5]

In spite of the fact that all the early organizations that were established in the area which is now Saskatchewan pursued some of the goals and followed some of the practices that unions were later to provide for their members, in the form of complicated ritual, debates and lectures, insurance benefits, and machinery for political pressure, their primary motive was to encourage mere wholesome fellowship. Therefore they did not perform a function essential to unions, that is, to bargain collect-

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4. Saskatchewan Archives, pamphlet file, "Constitution of the Patrons of Industry of Manitoba and the N.W.T." (1894 revision), p. 3.

5. Ibid., "The Political Position of the Patrons", p. 3.

ively with management for the daily bread of their members. The first associations established with this as the primary aim were the railway brotherhoods and they usually followed on the heels of the construction of the transcontinental railways across Western Canada. The first railway unions had Winnipeg as their home base in Western Canada. An example of this was the Northern Light Lodge 127 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, which was formed in the Manitoba capital in October, 1882. However, with the extension of the railway and the construction of service facilities at divisional points, more lodges were formed in other western centres. In January, 1887 the Cascade Lodge 342 of the B.L.F.E. was organized in Medicine Hat and this was followed by the Wheat City Lodge 464 in Brandon in August, 1891. Even though Moose Jaw was recognized early as a division point on the Canadian Pacific Railway it did not get a lodge of the B.L.F.E. until June, 1897, probably because few railroaders made their homes there until that time.[6] This was followed by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers No. 510 in the same year. In the next few years the entire work force connected with the running trades and the railway shops was organized and by 1911 there were eight railway brotherhoods in the city.[7]

In contrast to Moose Jaw, there was no organization of any sort in Saskatoon until the first decade of this century when the Canadian Pacific established a shop in Sutherland. This was also the case in

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6. The Moose Jaw unit of the B.L.F.E. was the Buffalo Range Lodge 521. The information concerning the railway unions was provided by Dr. Eugene Forsey.

7. Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Labour Report (hereafter referred to as Bureau of Labour Report) 1911, p. 47.

Regina where there was no need for unions until railway facilities became more sophisticated and diversified. The only lodge in existance in 1900 was No. 250 of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees.[8]

The fact that the only union organization before the turn of the century was among the trades connected with the railways might imply that there were no professional tradesmen in the Territories. This was not the case, however. Three newspapers had been established in Saskatchewan towns before 1885 (The Saskatchewan Herald, Battleford, 1878, the Regina Leader, 1883 and The Moose Jaw News, 1883) and all operated printing shops in conjunction with the newspaper. However, these were very small shops employing at most a handful of men. Consequently, there was no real reason to have a union. Yet when the Regina Leader plant became the office of the Queen's Printer late in 1883, with a greatly increased staff, there was still no attempt made to organize the printers there. It would appear that while Regina, Moose Jaw and Battleford remained part of the Northwest Territories there was no desire to add their workers to the ranks of the organized. However, when the Territories were divided to form the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905 there seemed to be a sudden interest on the part of unionists in Winnipeg, the Trades and Labor Congress and the American Federation of Labor in organizing Saskatchewan's workers. In any event, the organization of union locals began in earnest shortly after the creation of the province.

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8. It is interesting to note that the Regina branch of the B.L.F.E. was called the Cyclone Lodge because it received its charter on July 24, 1912, twenty-three days after Regina's famous cyclone.

CHAPTER 1

FORMATION AND RECOGNITION 1905-10

When it was stated that Saskatchewan was organized in a hurry, just that was meant. Among the crafts with organizations in the Northwest Territories, No. 1784 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in Regina was the first to be organized (1904), but it was dissolved less than two years later along with many other locals of the Brotherhood throughout Canada.[1] As well, the International Typographical Union maintained its reputation of being one of the first unions formed in any centre or area by organizing locals 657 (September) and 627 (December) in 1905 in Regina and Moose Jaw respectively. However, by the middle of 1907 other craft unions had also made substantial gains in Saskatchewan.

The inspiration for the organization of Western Canada came from the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada in co-operation with the Trades and Labor Council of Winnipeg, the most highly organized centre west of the Great Lakes. In the early spring of 1906, the Manitoba Executive Committee of the Congress, in conjunction with a committee of the Council, "took up the question of securing an organizer for the west," the Congress' Secretary-Treasurer having notified the Manitoba Executive "that if the West could furnish half the funds, the Congress would furnish the other half. In this connection it was proposed that all unions be asked for a donation of 10 cents per capita. This was decided on and all the Unions visited, which took about two months' time. The result was

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1. A total of fourteen locals of the U.B. of C. & J. were dissolved in 1906. The Labour Gazette, Feb. 1907, Table pp. 889-891.

disappointing, to say the least, only about $150.00 being subscribed." The Congress then provided the funds, and the Council chose W. R. Trotter, of the International Typographical Union, as special Congress organizer for Western Canada. He had the help of W. H. Reeve, of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (and president of the Winnipeg Council), Andrew Smith, of the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union, and W. N. Goodwin, of the Brotherhood of Painters, Paperhangers and Decorators of America.[2]

Trotter left Winnipeg July 19, 1906. He went first to Portage-la-Prairie, then to Brandon, then to Regina. In Regina, he found "Trades Unionism an unknown quantity except for the Typographical Union." He also found Reeve already at work on the carpenters, and Smith on the bricklayers and masons, for whom he had secured a "charter list." Trotter arranged a mass meeting, and wired for Goodwin to join his three colleagues. On his arrival, the four made out a charter list for the painters, and did further work to build up the carpenters and bricklayers. The labourers also expressed a wish to be organized, "and," Trotter reported, "a date was fixed to meet them." Arrangements were also made for the new unions to nominate delegates to a Trades and Labor Council.

Trotter then moved on to Moose Jaw, where he found a Trades and Labor Council already functioning; and at a mass meeting, the bricklayers and the plumbers both indicated their intention of organizing.

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2. Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, 1906, p. 18. (Hereinafter referred to as "Proceedings," with the year.) The Voice, (Winnipeg) July 20, 1906, p. 1.

He then returned to Regina. Working with the other three organizers, he inaugurated the Regina Trades and Labor Council, at a meeting in the city hall on July 28, 1906, in conjunction with the formation of locals in the various trades.[3]

From Regina the four dispersed, though each managed to do some organizing in Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. Trotter alone continued on to Medicine Hat, Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Nelson, Revelstoke and Vancouver. In the wake of the organizers remained what the Regina Leader claimed as "a boom of the biggest kind in the organization work among the various trades in Regina. When the printers organized a year ago they hoped that they would not be long alone as the only organization in the city....It is expected that in the course of a few months Regina will be one of the most thoroughly organized cities in Canada."[4] However, they also left the enthusiastic locals to fend for themselves and to survive solely on their own ability. The Trades and Labor Council in Regina collapsed soon after, when the president died of typhoid, another member of the executive became seriously ill from the same malady and yet another left the area for greener pastures. However, in February, 1907, the Moose Jaw council came to the rescue and aided in reorganization.[5] Thus, largely due to

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3. Proceedings, 1906, Trotter's report, 71-3. John Flett, A. F. of L. organizer, organized a plumbers' union in Regina after Trotter's visits, and secured the affiliation of the painters. On his second visit to Moose Jaw, Trotter organized the plumbers there, and, with Smith, the bricklayers. The Morning Leader, July 30, 1906, p. 1. See also The Voice, Aug. 3, 1906, pp. 1 and 6.

4. The Morning Leader, Aug. 4, 1906, p. 9.

5. The Voice, Feb. 22, 1907, p. 10.

Trotter's efforts, Moose Jaw had fifteen locals, (including the Railroad Brotherhoods), eight of which were affiliated with the Trades and Labor Council chartered by the T.L.C. Regina ran a close second with ten locals, all affiliated to their own Council.[6] With substantial inroads having been made, he moved on to a new position with the A.F.L.[7] while the results of his labour faced the problem of convincing their employers that they were there to stay.

When the bricklayers and masons decided to apply for a charter late in July, 1906, their press release stated that they did not intend to make any demands upon the contractors at that time but that they thought that organization was beneficial,[8] probably because less than a year before twenty bricklayers had gone on strike for an increase in wages and been coerced into returning to work, and the "conditions /had/ ceased to be."[9] The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners were not as lucky when they were reorganized as Local 1867 in June, 1907. No sooner had a schedule been drawn up than the Brotherhood faced the problem of getting their union recognized. The bitterness began some time in July and carried through August and September. The following short excerpt from the minutes of a "summons" meeting called by the Brotherhood illustrates the sentiments of the local in a rather forceful manner:

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6. Proceedings, 1907, p. 23.

7. The Voice, Feb. 15, 1907, p. 6.

8. The Morning Leader, July 12, 1906, p. 1.

9. The strike began on August 24, 1905. The Labour Gazette, Sept. 1905, p. 339.

> It was then suggested by Bro Craig that our Business Agent & this Union go right after the Haslem Block & Put all None Union /sic/ Men there into a Cannibal Melting Pot Until they lose there /sic/ Identity As Scabs and that Atkison /sic/ be made to drive all the rats out his Garrett /sic/ and all corporation litter out of the City.[10]

Tension continued, however, and on September 12 another schedule was drafted, this time in conjunction with the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (established in July, 1906), to be presented to the Builders' Exchange in hopes of receiving the signature of all the contractors. The terms of the proposed contract called for a ten hour day, 35¢ per hour, time-and-a-half for overtime, and supervision by a unionized foreman.[11] Thirteen contractors complied but five refused, and forty carpenters walked off the job on September 23. The firms affected were Snyder Brothers, Regina Construction Company, Atkinson, H. Black, and Murphy and Martin. The next day the latter two firms signed with the remaining three holding out on the question of the foremen.[12] The men finally went back to work on October 3 under the conditions in effect before the strike but with the promise that a meeting would be held early in 1908 to take up grievances.[13] For the moment little was achieved except that the Brotherhood came close to exhausting its coffers with the five dollars per week strike pay.

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10. U. B. of C. & J. Minute Book, 1907-1912, July 25, 1907 meeting.

11. The (Regina) Daily Standard, Sept. 25, 1907, p. 1.

12. Ibid., Sept. 25, 1907, p. 1. It is interesting to note that the Conservative Daily Standard gave front page coverage to the strike while the Leader, which supported Scott, did not even mention it.

13. The Labour Gazette, Oct. 1907, p. 469.

Negotiations began in January of 1908 between the Builders' Exchange and the Trades and Labor Council for the adoption of schedules for all the building trades in the city. At this time only the Plasterers' Union was not affiliated with the Council, though the Bricklayers and Masons seceded in May, 1908,[14] when the negotiations broke down. The Exchange contended that an increase of ten cents per hour demanded by the bricklayers and carpenters was outrageous and that it would not allow the matter to be brought before a board of arbitration.[15] Through June and July the bricklayers and masons were deeply concerned with an issue at a Royal North West Mounted Police barracks block under construction, involving union men working alongside non-union men contrary to the rules of the union. There was little reaction from the rest of the unions on this matter, even though a strike was threatened for July 17. Apathy was beginning to set in and fines were contemplated for those who were consistently absent on meeting nights.

The apathy ended late in June over the issue of prison labour. The issue first came up in December, 1907 when bitterness was aroused over the use of prison labour by the Capital Ice Company to cut ice on Wascana Lake. In retaliation the Saskatchewan executive of the T.L.C. held an emergency meeting and passed a resolution urging the provincial government to intervene on the grounds that "there are no less than six cases to our personal knowledge where families are destitute of the

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14. Ibid., June 1908, p. 1428. See also B. & M.I.U. No. 1 Minute Book, 1906-1910.

15. Ibid., May 1908, p. 1315.

very necessities of life, and this neither through negligence nor inadvertence, but solely on account of the scarcity of employment...."[16] The Saskatchewan executive interviewed J. A. Calder and W. R. Motherwell, the Provincial Treasurer and Minister of Agriculture respectively, in the middle of January, 1908 and soon after (January 24) the Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, J. F. Robinson, offered to take some of the unemployed to work in the government's gravel pit.[17] The Regina City Council provided several more jobs a few days later and the matter was settled temporarily.[18] When the Regina Trades and Labour Council revived the issue, this time in reference to the use of prison labour in the construction of the Broad Street bridge, the government obliged even more quickly, after the Council interviewed Premier Scott. The only bad feelings that remained were those between the Council and the Conservative Daily Standard over the credit for the victory.[19] Both claimed that they had been instrumental in influencing the government's decision.

Criticism of the provincial government by organized labour in Regina was renewed on July 1, the very day that the government announced that Peter Lyall and Sons of Montreal had been awarded the contract to construct the new public buildings in Regina.[20] Organized labour had

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16. Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Dec. 29, 1907, p. 1.

17. Sask. Dept. of Public Works Fill No. 111, Regina Jail 1906-1910, Saskatchewan Archives (SA), Robinson to Peat, Jan. 24, 1908.

18. Ibid., Robinson to Peat, Jan. 28, 1908.

19. The Morning Leader, June 20, 1908, p. 1.

20. Ibid., July 1, 1908, p. 1.

continually voiced its wish that a local firm be chosen to undertake the construction ever since the proposal for the legislative buildings had been adopted in 1906. When the formal announcement was made, July 1, the Trades and Labor Council condemned the action of the government at a meeting that evening, but, realizing that little could be done, passed a resolution that

> ...the Executive committee wait upon the Govt to ascertain what provision had been made to ensure local workmen being employed on the buildings in accordance with the promises made by the Govt last year.[21]

A week later the bricklayers' local decided to send a report to the government and to Peter Lyall and Sons outlining the conditions in effect in Regina in regard to their trade.[22]

The new legislative buildings were to be the crowning glory of a province just three years old in 1908; a towering shrine erected on the vast, flat lake-bottom that is the Regina plain. They were to be constructed completely of stone, a rare commodity in that area, with marble pillars in the interior to carry the eye to the vaulted dome which would reach skyward well over one hundred feet. A fitting edifice indeed, as well as a landmark.

The edifice remained a mere dream until August, 1907 when Professor Nobbs, of the McGill University department of architecture, was engaged to supervise the competition for a suitable design.[23] In November, the

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21. R.T. &. L.C. Minutes, July 1, 1908 meeting. (SA)

22. B. &. M.I.U. Minute Book, 1906-1910, July 7, 1908 meeting, p. 101.

23. Scott Papers 52167. (SA) Scott to Gilbert, Aug. 15, 1907.

design of E. and W. S. Maxwell of Montreal was accepted.[24] The Maxwell firm in turn chose the Lyall firm for the actual construction even though a bid from a Regina syndicate was $213,000 below even the conservative estimate of the architect. Maxwell's decision was based on the sound analysis that the Regina syndicate did not have the necessary capital to ensure completion of the project, though the decision was a political danger for the provincial government.

Premier Scott realized that choosing the Montreal firm would be hazardous to the future of his party, especially as he was contemplating an election,[25] but the tall, gaunt, sickly premier was a shrewd politician of the first order. A printer, publisher and journalist, he had been president of the company which owned the Regina Leader and the Moose Jaw Times, until he won the federal seat of Assiniboia West for the Liberal party. He resigned his seat in 1905 to lead the newly formed Saskatchewan Liberal party, and as leader he was chosen by Governor Forget to form the first government for the province in September, 1905. He retained his premiership in the election which followed in December of the same year.

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24. It is interesting to note a statement made by Martin J. Griffin, then Parliamentary Librarian at Ottawa, in attempting to persuade Scott to consider his son-in-law, Major Colborne Meredith, of the firm Bond, Burritt, Ewart and Meredith, as the architect for the future public buildings. "His tastes are artistic, his contractors are all very loyal to him; he is a popular engineer officer; and his workingmen never strike." Ibid., 52151. Griffin to Scott, Jan. 15, 1906.

25. Ibid., 52241. Scott to Cass Gilbert, Sept. 15, 1908.

Scott's relationship with organized labour was relatively good through the first years of his administration. The Typographical Union saw him as one of their own because he had been a member of the Winnipeg Typographical Union No. 191 in 1892. As well, the Liberal government continually offered a sympathetic ear to the deputations which waited on the government in 1907 and 1908. In August, 1909, Thomas M. Molloy, the first president of the Regina Trades and Labor Council was appointed fair-wage officer under the Department of Agriculture.[26] The award of the contract for the construction of the Legislative Buildings to an out-of-province firm, however, raised the dander of organized labour in Regina. As well, Haultain, the leader of the Conservative opposition, tried to exploit the resentment by claiming that the readers used in the public schools in the province had been printed by the non-unionized American Book Company.[27] Though the ranks of organized labour in Regina were not numerically large, they had a tendency to be vocal in their sympathies, so Scott could not afford to provoke their ire, especially as an election had been called for August 14, 1908.

The attention paid to organized labour by the Liberal party, especially in Regina, was considerable. The action on the public school readers was repudiated, and the first page of the Leader for August 13,

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26. There was a distinct reaction from the more radical elements within the ranks of organized labour to Molloy's appointment, on the grounds that it was merely a political reward. For example, R. P. Pettipiece, an organizer for the I.T.U., stated that "like dozens of others in Canada - and in the United States too - Mr. Molloy has been financially chloroformed by the executive committee of the employing and ruling class; and the labor movement has once more been used as a stepping-stone to a government job." The Voice, Sept. 3, 1909, 12.

27. The Morning Leader, Aug. 7, 1908, p. 1.

the day before the election, was almost wholly devoted to organized labour. The headline read: "WALTER SCOTT, TRADE UNIONIST," in bold letters. Below this, in smaller letters, was the statement: "The Premier Himself a Union Man, Is In Full Sympathy and Accord with the Working men of the City and Province---Vote for Walter Scott and 'Boost the Union Label'". Farther down the page was the transcript of a letter from the president and secretary-treasurer of the Winnipeg Typographical Union stating that Scott had withdrawn from that body as a member in good standing. The remainder dealt with the reasons why organized labour should vote Liberal.[28]

Whether labour voted Liberal completely it is difficult to say, but Scott did win handily. However, even though the Liberal party had connected itself with organized labour only nominally, the connection was to prove an embarrassment to Scott in reference to the Legislative Buildings then under construction. On the one hand, he wished to see the Buildings constructed as soon as possible to ensure that the total cost would not exceed the bid by too great a sum. On the other hand, organized labour saw the Liberal party's election promises as so much butter and treacle because the unions were involved directly with Peter Lyall and Sons as the hiring agent, not with the government. The Lyall firm had a consistent record of opposition to unionism and it could add to this record when the labourers on the Buildings walked off the job on May 22, 1909, beginning a string of strikes, with the government caught in the middle.

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28. The Evening Leader, Aug. 13, 1908, p. 1.

The unskilled labourers were the least likely union to go on strike at any time. The history of their attempts to organize was a sad one. Trotter attempted to organize a local in August, 1906, but was unsuccessful. On a return visit in May, 1907, he organized a local of the International Hod Carriers and Building Labourers Union, but the evidence seems to show that the local was soon dissolved, only to be reorganized, and again dissolved on the day of its re-formation (July 12), because it proved to be a veritable Tower of Babel: no one could agree on a secretary because of the language barriers.[29]

On August 17, 1907, the Trades Council discussed the labourers' problems and decided that owing to a lack of interest among the labourers the Council should approach John Brunner, a local cigar manufacturer and presumably a man fluent in German, to induce him to speak to a mass meeting in Germantown (a section of Regina peopled largely by recent immigrants).[30] The meeting failed and another attempt to reorganize the local in August, 1908, met the same fate.[31] Only with the discontent aroused on the Legislative Buildings did the labourers ask the Trades Council to reorganize their union, and on May 30, 1909, Local 203 of the International Hod Carriers and Building Labourers Union received its charter, with over 200 members. The language barrier was recognized by dividing the local into two sections: the first made up of English-

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29. Proceedings, 1907, pp. 61-63; The Labour Gazette, Feb. 1908, Tables on pages 978-983 and 984-986.

30. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Aug. 17, 1907 meeting.

31. Ibid., Aug. 21, 1908 meeting.

speaking members and the second of those who were of continental European origin.[32]

A precedent for strike action on the legislative buildings had been established by the two carpenters' locals, even though the strike lasted only one day. On May 3, 1909 the carpenters walked out after their demand that all men working in their trade be paid the going rate of 35¢ per hour or be dismissed was not met. However, after negotiations between the carpenters and Mr. Lecky, the superintendent for Peter Lyall and Sons, the demand was conceded and the men returned to work the next day.[33]

The labourers' strike less than three weeks later (May 22) was far more dramatic than that of the carpenters. A reporter from the Leader described the scene:

> Led on by a marshall /sic/ armed with a dinner pail, which he wielded valiantly and strenuously instead of a baton, a party of some sixty or seventy labourers from the parliament buildings marched through the street to the east end on Saturday afternoon, with blood in their eyes and a "win or die" look over every countenance.[34]

In all, one hundred and sixty-eight men were involved in the strike to back up demands for an hourly increase of 7½¢ to bring the wage to 25¢ per hour. Most of the strikers were recent immigrants, so a number of meetings were held that afternoon in Germantown.

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32. R.T. &. L.C. Minutes, May 24 and June 4, 1909 meetings; see also The Labour Gazette, Aug. 1909, p. 170.

33. The Morning Leader, May 4, 1909, p. 3, and The Daily Standard, May 3, 1909, p. 1, and May 4, 1909, p. 5.

34. The Morning Leader, May 24, 1909, p. 3.

Initially, the Trades Council was not too interested in the matter because of the apathy of the labourers toward organization; but when a union was formed on the 25th, a delegation of five from the Council was chosen to take up the matter with the government, accompanied by the Liberal M.L.A. for Regina City, J. F. Bole. As a result of this meeting, the labourers returned to work on Wednesday, May 26, at the old rate of wages, pending an enquiry by the government as to the going rate. The representative of the contractor, T. O. Lyall, agreed to comply with the government's findings and pay the increase retroactive to May 26.[35]

Lyall's expressed willingness to comply was strictly for public consumption, however. In a personal letter to the Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, F. J. Robinson, dated May 26, he demonstrated different sentiments. He attempted to prove that at least fifty men in Regina and "thousands" in Winnipeg were willing to sign contracts to work at 17½¢ at any time.[36] On May 31 he sent another letter to Robinson outlining the benevolence of his firm in providing rubber boots and oilskins to the men free of charge, as well as meals for men working several hours overtime.[37] Robinson balanced Lyall's contention that an increase was unnecessary with the information supplied by the Trades Council and other sources and found that the rate of wages for first class labourers was 17¢ to 25¢, and 15¢ to 20¢ for ordinary labourers.

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35. Ibid., May 25, 1909, p. 2, and May 26, 1909, p. 1.

36. Public Works File No. 118, Legislative Buildings Construction, Jan. - June, 1909. (SA) P. Lyall and Sons to Robinson, May 26, 1909.

37. Ibid., P. Lyall and Sons to Robinson, May 31, 1909.

This information was submitted to Scott in a memorandum on June 7,[38] and two days later Scott informed the contractors that the average wage for each class of labourer would apply, retroactive to May 26.[39]

Further hard feelings were displayed in August, 1909 when the two carpenters' locals submitted a new schedule to the Builders' Exchange asking for 40¢ per hour and a nine hour day (an increase of 5¢ and a reduction of one hour). The contractors, however, refused to comply, claiming that the union's "lumber butchers" were not worth more than 35¢ and that the demand for a nine hour day was unrealistic because of the seasonal nature of the trade. Therefore, they refused to recognize the unions. The combined United Brotherhood and Amalgamated Society contemplated a strike but after a meeting held in Trades Hall on August 18, with organizers J.T.C. Smith and J. A. Kenny in attendance, it was decided that a peaceful solution would be sought. The executive board of the international had not approved the demands so strike pay would not be forthcoming. Consequently, the unions decided to wait until they had the monetary strength.[40] Though the construction of the Legislative Buildings was not directly affected by this dispute at the time, it was later.

The settlement with the labourers in June must have been unsatisfactory. In the week of August 20 they walked out once more this time for a week, but on this occasion they had an advantage in that they

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38. Ibid., Memo to Scott, June 7, 1909.

39. Ibid., Scott to P. Lyall and Sons, June 9, 1909.

40. The Daily Standard, Aug. 19, 1909, p. 4.

could not be easily replaced because of the need of labour to harvest the crop.[41] What their demands were, or what settlement was agreed on, is not known because the local press does not even mention the dispute.

In contrast, the strike of the bricklayers and masons in January, 1910, gained wide press coverage, at least at first. As early as June, 1909 the Saskatchewan Local No. 1 of the B. & M.I.U. showed concern with the conditions on the building site. Rumours were circulating that some men were being paid less than union rates. In December, a debate arose in the local over the necessity of working on Sunday,[42] but the first signs of bitterness did not manifest themselves until January 10 when the union met to discuss a proposal by Lyall's superintendent, Lecky, that the bricklayers lay plaster blocks at less than the standard rate (55¢ per hour) or the work would be done by labourers. When the firm remained adamant in the face of protests, the men walked off in a body on January 15, leaving behind one of their number to inform the union of the number of labourers laying plaster blocks.[43]

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41. Public Works File No. 118, Legislative Buildings Construction, July - Dec. 1909, J. E. Fortier (Clerk of the Works) to E. & W. S. Maxwell, Aug. 27, 1909.

42. B. &. M.I.U. Minute Book, Aug. 1906 - May, 1910.

43. The minute book of the B. & M.I.U. No. 1 gives an extensive account of the strike on a day-to-day basis. The evidence therein is borne out by the documents in the Public Works File No. 118 for this period, so the minute book has been used as a basis. Where government documents have been used, this has been noted. As far as the local press is concerned little, if anything, is added and in most cases objectivity is sacrificed for the sensational. It is interesting to note, however, that the Daily Standard made an about-face from previous policy by sympathizing with the strikers.

T. M. Molloy, the Fair Wage Officer, appeared before the union on the 17th to canvass its views on the matter at issue, and was told that in all buildings lined with terra cotta tile or plaster blocks, the work had been done by skilled labour. With this information Molloy stated that he could convince the government that skilled labour was required. At this meeting, after Molloy had retired, the union decided to establish a picket line.

Next morning, Molloy reported that a telegram had been sent through Robinson to E. & W.S. Maxwell asking the firm to "please enquire and ascertain definitely class of labor usually employed by contractors on eastern contracts to erect plaster block partitions and wages paid."[44] Later that day an answer was sent to Robinson stating that only plasterers and bricklayers had ever laid plaster blocks in Montreal.[45] This Molloy submitted to the union on the 20th and stated that he would submit a report to that effect to Scott.[46] Later that day Molloy reported that Scott had decided in favour of the union and that the men could go back to work. Immediately a delegate was sent to see if Lecky wanted any bricklayers and masons.

The delegation reported back on the 21st saying that Lecky would send for men when he wanted them and that labourers would suffice until then. The delegation sent to interview Scott then reported that the

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44. Public Works Fill No. 118, Legislative Buildings Construction, Jan.-Apr. 1910. Telegram, Robinson to E. & W.E. Maxwell, Jan. 18, 1910.

45. Ibid., Maxwell to Robinson, Jan. 18, 1910.

46. Ibid., Molloy to Scott, Jan. 20, 1910.

Premier's hands were tied until he had absolute proof to back up the union's claim. Under the contract between Peter Lyall and Sons and the government, the Department of Public Works could not interfere in the matter unless the established (or current) rate of wages for the specific work done was not being paid. If he had a signed statement from a contractor stating the fair wage for plaster block laying he could then compel the Lyall firm to comply. Immediately the corresponding secretary was ordered to write to the Winnipeg and Toronto locals of the B. & M.I.U. requesting signed statements from contractors. On the same day Molloy himself wrote the Dominion Fair Wage Officer, J. C. McNiven, asking him under what circumstances the plaster blocks in the library building at Ottawa had been laid.[47] McNiven's reply was in full agreement with the union. The case for the union was further strengthened on the 22nd, when the two resident architects representing the government and the Maxwell firm submitted a report to Robinson stating that "certain sundry imperfections" were appearing in the partitions laid by the labourers.[48] Meanwhile, in Trades Hall the union was contemplating measures to blacklist Peter Lyall and Sons throughout Canada.

Further proof of the union's contention was presented to Molloy on January 27 in the form of an affidavit signed by H. Andrews of Regina, the contractor responsible for supplying plaster blocks to the buildings. In the affidavit Andrews swore that in his many years of experience

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47. Ibid., Molloy to McNiven, Jan. 21, 1910.

48. Ibid., Gunter and Fortier to Robinson, Jan. 22, 1910.

plaster blocks had always been laid by plasterers or bricklayers as there was no such trade as plaster block layers.[49]

While the bricklayers and masons remained firm in their refusal to work alongside labourers in laying plaster blocks and concerned themselves with doling out strike pay, Scott was in the east on business. There he consulted various firms in Ottawa, Montreal and New York and found that the plaster blocks for Ottawa College had been laid by "experts" and that in New York there was no dispute on the matter: bricklayers were used in all cases. The New York Permanent Arbitration Board confirmed this.[50]

While Scott was in New York, Alf Geeves, Seventh Vice-President of the B. & M.I.U. arrived in Regina at the request of the local and on February 7 he spoke with Lecky. He promised Lecky all the craftsmen he desired and that they would lay twice as many plaster blocks as the labourers. Lecky in turn promised to take up the matter with the head office of the firm as soon as the men returned to work. Some discussion ensued as to whether the men should return to work alongside the labourers. It was finally decided that Lecky would have one week to get an answer from Montreal after the men returned to work. Also, Scott would be informed of the arrangement. However, when a delegation was sent out to inform Lecky of this arrangement they were told that he was going east for two weeks and the men could return to work when he got back. After Geeves interviewed Molloy and Robinson, he reported that

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49. Ibid., Affidavit from H. Andrews, Jan. 27, 1910.

50. Ibid., Scott to Robinson, Feb. 12, 1910.

they shared Lecky's view. The men finally returned to work on February 14 when the government ordered P. Lyall and Sons to pay the established rate of 55¢ per hour for the laying of plaster blocks.[51] No discrimination was made between union and non-union men but despite this, relations still somehow remained amicable.

Such was not the case when the carpenters walked off the job on May 2, 1910, precipitating a near-general strike. Hard feelings began as early as February, 1910, when the carpenters submitted a new schedule to the contractors calling for an increase in wages and shorter working hours and for the "employment of Union Men only".[52] Negotiations began, but the carpenters refused to back down from their demand for a closed shop, and on May 2 what the Standard termed the "May Day Strike" began, as 265 men from the carpenters', electricians' and plumbers' unions attempted to back up their demands with strike action.[53] The next day saw a number of strike-breakers brought in and in retaliation men who

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51. The Morning Leader, Feb. 14, 1910, p. 5.

52. T. O. Lyall sent a copy of the schedule to Robinson on February 8 with an attached note stating that he did not think that it was the Government's intention to have the work on the buildings restricted through such an agreement. Robinson's reply on the 25th must have come as a surprise to Lyall. The reply stated that Robinson had been "instructed to say that excepting from an ardent desire to see the construction of the buildings proceed as smoothly as possible, the matter of your letter is one in which we really have no interest, as we are of the opinion that the authority of the Commission in the matter of wages and wage earners only covers the rate of wage and had nothing whatever to do with the personnel of the wage earners." Public Works File No. 118. P. Lyall and Sons to Robinson, Feb. 18, 1910, and Robinson to Peter Lyall and Sons, Feb. 25, 1910.

53. The Morning Leader, May 2, 1910, p. 1.

had been undecided walked out in sympathy with the strikers. There was an occasional exchange of insults but no major incidents took place until five strikers were arrested on the afternoon of May 9 on a complaint, lodged by a contractor, of disorderly conduct and intimidation.[54] After bail was raised by A. S. Wells (president of the Trades Council) and Alex Watchman, the men were released.

The carpenters' union protested the arrest of the men in a strongly-worded statement which appeared in the Morning Leader on May 11. The statement charged unfair discrimination on the part of a handful of the local constabulary to the extent that "a workingman is not even permitted by these uniformed lackeys to stand and talk to one of his friends on the street without being told to 'move on'."[55] The carpenters' charges were borne out to some extent when the arrested strikers appeared in court on May 12. On entering the courtroom, the prosecutor, J. F. L. Embury, stated that the men had been merely led astray and therefore the charges would be dropped in favour of prosecuting the real guilty party when he was found. Whether the police were deliberately attempting to intimidate the workers it is difficult to say, but the incident did cast an aura of martyrdom over the strikers, especially when the Morning Leader screamed about the gross miscarriage of justice in a column-long editorial. It read as follows:

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54 Ibid., May 10, 1910, p. 1.

55. Ibid., May 11, 1910, p. 10.

56. Ibid., May 13, 1910, p. 8.

> Something is evidently wrong somewhere. Either the men should never have been arrested, or else, if there was sufficient ground for their arrest, the prosecution should not have been abandoned. Such a conclusion as that arrived at yesterday can be satisfactory to no one....
>
> Mr. Embury's statement to all intents and purposes...is an admission of the innocence of the arrested men, in which case the plain inference is that a gross miscarriage of justice was perpetrated in their arrest, the law being apparently invoked with a view to intimidating the strikers.[57]

Further strength was given to the fight for the closed shop on May 9 when the painters' and plasterers' unions struck in sympathy with the other unions. The main impetus behind their decision was the breakdown of negotiations held on May 6 in City Hall between the Building Trades Council and the contractors. The latter refused to discuss the schedule proposed by the Council and the deadlock continued.[58] However, the bricklayer and masons decided overwhelmingly against strike action on May 9, thus leaving a gap in an otherwise general strike among the building trades.[59] From the 9th to the 27th of May, when F. A. Acland, the Federal Deputy Minister of Labour, arrived in Regina at the request of the strikers, the situation remained stalemated. The only sign of activity came when the Builders' Exchange was reorganized by the contractors on May 17 with Lecky as its president.[60]

Immediately on arriving in Regina, Acland interviewed both the Building Trades Council and the Builders' Exchange to see if there were

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57. Ibid., p. 4.

58. Ibid., May 9, 1910, p. 4.

59. B. & M.I.U. Minute Book, Aug. 1906 - May 1910, May 9 meeting.

60. The Labour Gazette, June 1910, p. 1442; The Morning Leader, May 18, 1910, p. 1.

grounds for settlement under the Conciliation Act. After several in camera discussions Acland must have convinced the Building Trades Council that its demand for a closed shop was unrealistic, because the Council made the initial compromise by giving up its demand for the closed shop in hope of getting concessions from the Builders' Exchange. Both sides held meetings on June 3 and the Exchange drew up its version of a fair schedule. However, at a meeting the next day the Council rejected the proposal on the grounds that the spirit of compromise initiated by the Council had not been recognized by the Exchange.[61] Another meeting was held by the Exchange on the 7th, resulting in further revisions in its proposals, but again the Building Trades Council turned it down.

A further complication appeared at this point. The painters had agreed to settle on June 6, but when they discovered that they would not deal with the individual contractor but with the Exchange, they decided to form a co-operative to do contract work on their own. The carpenters, plumbers, steamfitters and electricians threatened to follow suit if the Builders' Exchange did not make a reasonable offer soon.[62] Nothing came of the threat, however, and the situation again lapsed into stalemate until a settlement was reached on June 14.

Some interest in the strike was maintained in the press over the arrest of one Peter Clayton Foley, a financial organizer for the U.B. of

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61. The Morning Leader, June 6, 1910, p. 8.

62. Ibid., June 7, 1910, p. 1.

C. & J. Foley allegedly struck a man carrying a saw and square on the night of June 5 while under the influence of alcohol. When he was brought to trial on the 6th the prosecutor claimed that the man assaulted was not a strike-breaker, as Foley had thought, but was merely on his way to build a shack on his homestead. On the other hand, Foley claimed that he was the victim of mistaken identity. However, he was sentenced to a month of hard labour only to be released the next day because another carpenter, John Spence, signed a sworn statement admitting the assault.[63] Considering the hard feelings that the strike aroused it is very surprising that a more serious outbreak of violence did not occur.

An agreement was finally reached on June 14 which was to remain in force until December 30, 1911. Though the union men had to give in to the open shop, they did gain an across-the-board increase in wages of ten cents per hour and in most cases the hours of work per day were reduced by one.[64]

The general strike indicated to the general public, to the employers and to the men themselves that they could stand firm behind their demands and that they also were capable of compromise. At the cost of several thousand man-hours the principle of collective bargaining had been established, and therefore it was almost anti-climactic to the unionists and the public when the bricklayers and masons walked out on August 8 in sympathy with their counterparts who were on strike against the Lyall firm in Montreal. As only twenty-four men were affected, there was no

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63. Ibid., June 8, 1910, p. 5, and June 9, 1910, p. 8.

64. See the Labour Gazette, July 1910, p. 123 for the schedule that was finally accepted.

press coverage of the strike to speak of, even though it dragged on for a month. It finally ended on September 8 as quietly as it had begun, when the bricklayers and masons in Montreal returned to work.

The formative years of organized labour in Regina were indeed trying years. Shrugging off bitter comments from all those who saw unionism as striving only for anarchy, or, more immediately, as a threat to the established order, union leaders continued to render service to their fellow workers in the only way they knew how. But after the first contract had been signed apathy set in among the rank and file. Local and council meetings were frequented only by the same few, and even some of these came only for something to do. New life was injected only when a strike seemed to be the sole solution to a dispute.

The rash of strikes during the construction of the legislative buildings is important not merely because certain demands were made and partially fulfilled by strike action. The ranks of organized labour began to realize that the effectiveness of a central body was inversely proportional to its size and its diversity in representation. The Trades and Labour Council began as a vigorous organization, full of ideas with which to set the world on its proper axis, but under the stress of strike conditions, it became more and more a mere debating circle concerned with civic issues rather than with more immediate problems. The almost futile comment in the Council minutes of June 3, 1910, "All trades reported on strike," illustrates this.[65] Nothing follows this statement concerning a discussion, even though a near general strike was in progress. On the

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65. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, June 3, 1910 meeting.

other hand, the more specialized Building Trades Council proved itself under fire to be a more unifying body, quite capable of representing its members. The closed shop had not been achieved but advances had been made.

Another condition which in the end augured well for the trade union movement in Saskatchewan must also be examined. The legislative buildings provided a laboratory with ideal conditions for union development. The firm of Peter Lyall and Sons was the symbol of the type of management which cared little for a union contract if it could cut back on costs. Its impressive anti-union record as well as its actions while constructing the buildings demonstrated this. This was good for Regina's unions because it provided a means of achieving unity -- unity which a small, weak-willed employer who gave in easily would not stimulate.

The buildings themselves were also a symbol, not only to Regina but to the province as a whole. In order to set a precedent it was absolutely essential for the principle of unionism to be established on this largest construction project in the province up to that time. If this had not been done it is difficult to say what the fate of unionism would have been in later years.

The fact that the principle of unionism was established in construction of the buildings was not wholly due to the efforts of unionists themselves, however. The support of a sympathetic government was in large measure instrumental in organized labour's success. If a project equal in size to the legislative buildings had been constructed by a non-government body which was not concerned with the interests of a vocal minority, the net

results would probably have been different. There would have been little concern for fair-wage clauses and the jurisdiction of certain skilled craftsmen and little hesitation in hiring out-of-province labour at reduced wages. Because this gigantic project was undertaken at public expense there was a natural concern for local interests, and as a result unionists throughout the province benefitted. Even though feelings ran high on certain occasions the surprising lack of violence was in part due to the unionist's trust in the fair wage officer who was still looked on as one of their own. Thus, even though the appointment of the fair wage officer was only a start in labour legislation, he had proved his worth in maintaining industrial peace.

II

Although the development of the labour movement in Saskatoon came somewhat later than in Regina, the problems faced were essentially the same. It seems that the city to the north was bypassed by Trotter and associates in their organization drives in 1906 and 1907, possibly because with its 3,011 inhabitants, it had only half as many people as Regina and Moose Jaw in 1906.[66]

This figure was a substantial increase from the 113 inhabitants in 1901 but the T.L.C. and the Winnipeg Traders and Labour Council probably based their assumptions on the earlier figure. Therefore, the organization of the city's unions was accomplished on a piecemeal basis by individual international representatives, who responded to a specific need for organization within a certain craft.

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66. Canada, Sessional Papers, (1907), no. 17 A, p. xx.

There was at least one union organized early in the century, the International Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, which received its charter in April, 1903, but the first non-railway union was the Saskatoon Typographical Union, which began operating in June, 1906. Later in the year the Saskatoon Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners was established; it was disbanded in 1907 but was revived in 1911. Several other locals were organized between 1907 and 1910 and by 1911 there was a total contingent of twenty-one locals.[67] It was not until the first month of 1909, when there were seven permanent locals in existence, that it was decided that a central body should be established.[68] The Trades and Labour Council held its formative meeting on February 15th and it received its charter from the T.L.C. later in the month. The first president was W. Youhill of the Saskatoon Typographical Union. The council immediately embarked on an enthusiastic union label and organizing campaign[69] and by June there were a dozen affiliated locals.[70] As it turned out, the Council found that it needed all the strength it could muster to face its first major crisis, which occurred within a matter of weeks. The dispute in question, involving unskilled labour in the city, pointed out two significant things. First, although unionism was recognized by the members of the union locals as beneficial to their existence, it was not deemed so by management as was illustrated by its

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67. Report on Labour Organization, 1911, pp. 74-5.

68. The Voice, Feb. 5, 1909, p. 1.

69. Ibid., April 2, 1904, p. 4.

70 Ibid., June 11, 1909, p. 1.

reluctance to pay a decent wage and to provide proper safeguards for the safety of its employees. In this respect the situation was the same as in Regina during the struggle for recognition. Secondly, the dispute revealed the disdain and lack of respect which unskilled labourers had to suffer because they lacked a trade and could be easily replaced.

It appears that discontent had been brewing for a long time among the men responsible for digging the ditches for the city's sewer and water system. Their wages were extremely poor and the condition of the trenches was a threat to life and limb. Finally, in exasperation the unskilled labourers made overtures to the T.L.C. to see if they could be organized. The result was that with the aid of the organization committee of the Trades Council they became members of the Federal Labor Union No. 12801.[71] No time was wasted in affiliating with the central body.

In June a delegation from the council came before the bar of the City Council on behalf of the Federal Labor Union to enquire if something could be done concerning conditions on the works projects being carried on under contract from the city. However, the delegation received no satisfaction. Early in July the Council advised local 12801 to appeal to the Federal Department of Labour for a conciliation board under the terms of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (the Lemieux Act).

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71. A Federal Labor Union was unique in that it was directly affiliated with and serviced by the T.L.C. and had no connection with an international union.

The Department of Labour complied, thus creating a precedent in that this was the first time that government at any level had been brought under the terms of the Lemieux Act.

The demands of the unskilled were three in number. They wanted an increase in wages from 17½ to 25 cents an hour, adequate cribbing on the excavations in which men were working and their wages paid in cash on a weekly basis. At a couple of meetings with the workers the Trades Council aroused them to the point where they would not accept anything less.[72]

The first two men to be appointed to the conciliation board were Alexander Smith, a local contractor, and Edward Stephenson, the T.L.C. representative, who had helped to organize local 12801. It took several weeks to find a chairman but it was finally agreed that Senator E. J. Meilicke of Dundurn would fill this position. The examiners for the city were Mayor William Hopkins and Alderman Robert McIntosh, the chairman of the Board of Works. Representing the union were A. Sibley and Honore J. Jaxon. The latter had come to Saskatoon to establish a discussion circle but he could not help becoming involved in the dispute.[73]

The board finally began proceedings on August 13 and the first day was spent answering questions and clearing up technicalities raised by Jaxon. The second day accomplished settlement of the rules of procedure. Finally the chairman decided that "the case should be placed before the

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72. The Daily Phoenix, July 26, 1909, p. 2.

73. See infra, p.65.

board from the standpoint of the labor union, the city then to have opportunity of meeting it in rebuttal."[74]

After a brief adjournment the board resumed sittings on August 17 and a great deal of evidence was brought forth concerning wages in other cities as compared with those in Saskatoon. Also, several witnesses were called to testify that the cribbing of the trenches was inadequate and unsafe.[75] In fact it was pointed out that several men had been injured by cave-ins. Other witnesses testified that even the small wages they were receiving were held back by certain contractors.[76] Yet another witness gave testimony regarding the means by which the contractor made use of city water without paying for it, one man being posted to shout "jumbo" if he saw a city inspector approaching. Immediately the area around the water main would be vacated.[77] This bit of information must have caused the representatives of the city to become more conciliatory because during the proceedings on the 21st they offered the men 20 cents per hour as well as assurance of adequate cribbing. As a result, only the issue of payment of wages in cash was still outstanding.[78] At that point the hearings were adjourned until the 26th because the chairman was required in Regina. However, it appears that they were never continued because no further reports were published in The Daily Phoenix.

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74. The Daily Phoenix, Aug. 14, 1909, pp. 1, 10.

75. Ibid., Aug. 17, 1909, p. 8.

76. Ibid., Aug. 18, 1909, p. 1.

77. Ibid., p. 8.

78. Ibid., Aug. 21, 1909, p. 12.

Therefore, one must assume that the members of local 1280l and the city reached a private settlement on the question of cash wages.

The actual nature of the final settlement is unknown but it is likely that it was favourable to the workers and this was in part due to the fact that the Trades and Labor Council, although it was still a fledgling organization, was able to mobilize its forces to help the unskilled labourers in their hour of need. This meant that organized labour in Saskatoon had come of age, and in a very short time.

III

In contrast to the very evident lack of a basic, urban industry in Regina and Saskatoon, Moose Jaw's claim to fame was its web-like network of railway tracks. The division point on the C.P.R. -- this was a term flaunted by all residents of this, the fastest growing centre in the province. It was also the terminal point of the Soo Line and thus the centre of expansion for the province. It would never stop growing, they said in 1906. And, as every union town that amounted to anything had a central body, some of the railway brotherhoods took the initiative and formed the province's first trades and labor council in January, 1906. The city's only non-railway union, the International Typographical Union No. 627, formed the previous month, was asked to join. Thus, when W. R. Trotter entered the city in July, 1906 on the "big push" he found a thriving council quite willing to aid him in organizing the unorganized. The result was that locals of the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union and the United Association of Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters and Steam Fitters' Helpers received

their charters within the next month.[79] By the middle of 1907 Moose Jaw boasted fifteen locals in all and by 1911 the total had risen to twenty-one.

It is significant that the acceptance of unions and unionists in Moose Jaw came very early. It is more significant, however, that this acceptance came without the difficulty that had been evident in Regina and Saskatoon. In fact there were no major disputes at all in the railway city during the period 1905-1910. One primary factor may have accounted for this. Whereas unions in Regina and Saskatoon had been imposed on the economic life of their respective cities by the organization drives of 1906 and 1907, unions in Moose Jaw, in the form of the railway brotherhoods, had has a parallel development with that of the city. In addition, because of the importance of the C.P.R. to Moose Jaw there was a general realization by all citizens that satisfied unionists meant a continuance of growth and prosperity. It was also significant that a large proportion of the people of the city were unionists. Of the 6,249 residents in 1906 it was estimated that 2,500 were members of unions affiliated with the Trades and Labor Council.[80]

Such a peaceful situation might have caused the local Trades and Labor Council to be rather inactive but such was not the case. As it was not fettered with the problem of co-ordinating strikes the Council took on the role of the conscience of the Moose Jaw ratepayers and it

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79. The Voice, Aug. 17, 1906, p. 1.

80. Canada, Sessional Papers, (1907), no. 17 A, p. xx, and Moose Jaw Times, Aug. 7, 1906, p. 1. The second figure is probably somewhat exaggerated but it does indicate union strength in Moose Jaw.

became the watchdog over the activities of the City Council. More specifically, the Trades Council's attention fell on the city's municipally-owned power plant where the most blatant maladministration seemed to exist.

The situation surrounding the operation of the power plant came to the attention of the Trades Council from a source outside the Council. An electrician by the name of John Thomas Foster, who had been in the employ of the City of Moose Jaw as engineer in the power plant since December, 1904, had been dismissed from his position in February, 1906 after a series of disagreements with the superintendent, G. V. Reid. The reason for the dismissal was that he had allegedly refused to keep records of the running of the engine in the plant. Foster was not satisfied with the reason given and he took the matter up with the City Council, which, however, refused to listen to his complaint. Although he was not even a member of a union he knew of the Trades and Labor Council's concern for the power plant, so he approached that body with some information on the internal operations of the plant.

The main observation made by Foster was that an electric meter had not been installed in the Moose Jaw Flour Mills owned by the mayor, Donald McLean. The Municipal Committee of the Trades Council immediately began to make an investigation on its own. While the committee was searching for information a delegation from the Trades Council approached the City Council on March 19 to see if anything could be done about the unfair treatment by Reid of the men in the power plant. The Council refused to do anything about it, claiming that the superintendent had full control over the plant's operation and that he had been appointed on a yearly basis.

Having been rebuffed, the Trades and Labor Council next instructed its president, James Somerville, to write a letter to the City Council asking for an investigation into the books of the light plant to see if there were any irregularities. The main question asked in the letter, written on May 28, was why an increase had been voted in the salary of Reid at the May 21 meeting when his contract was not due for revision for several months. To answer this question the Trades Council even offered its services in the investigation. However, the City Council was no more enamoured of this prospect than it was comforted by the editorial comment of the Times, that "if everything has been properly conducted, the findings will redound to the credit of the Council and the city electrician /the superintendent/".[81] It proceeded to shelve the letter by placing it before the Fire, Water and Light Committee.

On learning of the Council's decision, another delegation of organized labour, with Somerville, visited the City Council a few days later. On this occasion Somerville asked to speak on the matter at hand but was refused. The mayor then asked Somerville if there were any charges to be made against himself or the Council. Somerville answered in the negative but stated that there were allegations serious enough to warrant investigation. McLean became sufficiently provoked to state that the allegations had to be published in the local paper before action would be taken.

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81. Ibid., June 1, 1906, p. 6.

Having reached the end of its patience, the Trades Council complied with McLean's request. On June 8, 1906 a long letter, dated June 5, appeared in the Times. In it the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of Foster were reviewed but the issue of greatest importance was not the actions of the superintendent. Rather, the Trades Council was "after clean city government", not the "star chamber methods" used by the city fathers. Almost apologetically the letter went on to state that "we did not want to say this in public but the ... action of the council, on what we consider a deliberate insult to a representative body of citizens leads us to this action." Further on the City Council was condemned for the way in which the Trades Council delegates had been rebuked on several occasions and for the indignities they had suffered while in the presence of the chief magistrate and his colleagues.

> It is very dignifying for both council and visitor to see the latter under the necessity of either standing hat in hand or seated upon the floor. If anything was necessary to reveal the makeup of our present council, this completed the revelation and we feel justified in exposing their weaknesses. If the most humble visitor having the right and privilege to attend our council honors us by his presence, he will receive the courtesy of a chair and a great deal more.

The weaknesses of the council which the Trades Council had been forced to make public included the following:

> Many consumers have no meter connections.
> Meters are not read for three or four months at a time.
> Meters in some cases are not read at all.
> The city electrician /the superintendent/ is agent for supplies purchased by the city from the firm who gave the high recommendations which secured him the position.
> He spends part of his time soliciting for this company which may count in part for his being overworked.
> Meters are not sealed nor have they been inspected by the government inspector provided and as a result many complain of exorbitant rates.

> He /the superintendent/ has undertaken to supply cheap power at the expense of the light consumer.
> He is interested in an electrical firm doing business in the city.

Although the rumours enumerated in the letter were quite sweeping and affected almost everyone using power from the plant, the main focus of attention was the mayor and his relationship with Reid.

> These are rumours that might have been overlooked had not a raise in salary /to Reid/ been advanced under such peculiar circumstances.
> When the Mayor explains away the apparent connection between the lights /in McLean's flour mill/ and the salary grabs the Trades Council will then make charges.
> If he will tell the public how much he paid for lights in the flour mill during the winter and how the amount was computed, it would not be necessary to make charges.[82]

Although the Trades Council had been careful not to make specific charges the published rumours were adequate enough for Reid to announce a few days later that he was going to enter civil action for libel against Somerville.[83] However, he must have conferred with McLean and decided that the latter had better grounds for such an action, because on July 3 a preliminary hearing was held to determine whether there was adequate evidence for a civil libel action with McLean as plaintiff and Somerville as respondent. At the hearing the mayor claimed that the charge that he had received free power from the city plant was false. It was then decided by the magistrate that there were adequate grounds for a charge of criminal libel and Somerville was released on $1000 bail.[84]

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82. Ibid., June 8, 1906, p. 4.

83. Ibid., June 12, 1906, p. 4.

84. Ibid., July 5, 1906, p. 1.

The trial opened on August 3 in the hot, stuffy, makeshift courthouse. Throughout the two day proceedings a great deal of conflicting evidence was presented by both the prosecution and the defense. Several interesting bits of testimony were brought forth, however. An old employee in McLean's mill testified that there were upwards of forty lights burning in the mill throughout the winter and that these had been left burning all night. This contradicted Reid's testimony that there were less than twenty and they had been used sparingly. Another witness, an experienced electrician, testified that the bill for power which Reid had finally presented to the mayor was at most half of what it should have been. Yet another witness stated that on April 24, the day after the Trades and Labor Council had discussed what was to be done in connection with the situation surrounding the power plant, he had seen Reid leaving the city hall with a meter presumably to install it in McLean's mill.

All the testimony presented in the two day trial proved to be for nothing and a verdict was never reached because a juror by the name of Edward Colling, a local druggist, collapsed from the heat. The judge dismissed the rest of the jury and ordered a retrial the next time the court met.[85]

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85. A detailed account of the trial appears in Ibid., Aug. 7, 1906, pp. 1, 7. However, there is some confusion as to whether the trial was a civil or a criminal case. The Times for July 5 states that the original action was to be civil but this was changed to a criminal action and Somerville was released on bail, which is usual in criminal cases. Yet, the same paper, reporting the trial referred to it as McLean vs. Somerville rather than as the King vs. Somerville as it should have done if the charge was one of criminal libel. After checking all civil and criminal proceedings in the court records of East Assiniboia (the judicial district of which Moose Jaw was part) for two years after August, 1906 and finding no mention of any proceedings involving either McLean or Somerville one must conclude that the original trial was of a civil nature and that the suit was dropped. If it was a criminal case it could not have been dropped without a notice in the records of the information being withdrawn.

Despite the trouble that Somerville got into on behalf of the Trades Council it did bring the matter of the power plant to the attention of the burgesses. One of the aldermen, John H. Bunnell, recognized the disenchantment with the City Council and at a meeting of the Council late in August he asked for Reid's dismissal. He failed to get a seconder[86] but the superintendent took the hint and handed in his resignation. It was accepted, effective September 30,[87] but before Reid had a chance to pack his things the council reconsidered its decision and he was reinstated at the same salary.[88]

Sufficiently disgusted with the activities of the City Council, the Trades Council ran two candidates on a reform platform in the civic election that autumn and one was elected.[89] This small success did not cause it to relax its vigilance as a watchdog over civic affairs. Soon after the new Council had been sworn in another delegation from the Trades and Labor Council waited on it, presenting a new complaint. It suggested "that the city scavenging should be done by the city if possible, or at least should be done under proper supervision and an effective service secured."[90] Later delegations complained about the local hospital, the telephone system and the civic franchise.[91] While other Trades

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86. Ibid., Aug. 28, 1906, p. 1.

87. Ibid., Sept. 18, 1906, p. 4.

88. Ibid., Sept. 28, 1906, p. 10.

89. See infra, p. 66.

90. Moose Jaw Times, Feb. 9, 1907, p. 1.

91. Ibid., Dec. 7, 1906, p. 8.

Councils in the province were concerned with imposing their member unions on the economic life of their respective communities, there was no necessity of this in Moose Jaw and the Trades and Labor Council there chose to have itself recognized not only as an economic power but also as a power in civic government.

Although union recognition in respect to the closed shop and legislative procedure for certification had not been gained, a recognition of another sort was achieved. The ordinary citizen began to recognize the sincerity of unions, not because of the necessity inherent in their demands but rather because of the tenacious manner in which the demands were pursued, even in the face of seemingly insuperable odds. The employer was forced to recognize the fact that unions were there to stay and would remain a vocal and decisive part of Saskatchewan life. Most important, however, was the fact that the budding unionist was shocked out of thinking that the union was concerned only with utopias, and began to realize that his union was part of his day-to-day existence. Union membership meant meetings, dues, shop stewards, business agents, picket lines, routine business, special meetings, negotiations and placards. A commitment had been made, presumably for the better.

CHAPTER 2

CONSOLIDATION 1910-14

Following the year 1910 the labour situation in the province seemed to become stabilized. The fight for recognition had been won for all intents and purposes, among the building trades at least. Only when those employed in the service industries sought the benefits of organization was the struggle renewed; but this was to come later. In 1911 there was little concern among unionists for the service industries. There still remained the problem of convincing the renegades who remained outside of a bona fide union that their salvation lay in being organized. Only the International Typographical Union, though, approached this problem with any degree of success. The one alternative to the closed shop was to place pressure on the government to limit immigration, thus minimizing competition for jobs by keeping the labour force relatively small. However, in most cases the calm which prevailed between 1910 and the war allowed Saskatchewan unionists to settle back and contemplate their raison d'etre, further consolidate their position, reap the benefits of their organizations and take a greater interest in civic and provincial affairs, without the constant necessity of defending the trade union movement.

The primary stabilizing force in the period 1911-14 was the unprecedented prosperity which characterized those years, although there was a slight recession in 1913. For the first time in a number of years, the balance of rainfall and summer heat in 1911 had been almost perfect, resulting in a bumper crop harvested before frost had a chance to lower the grade. The elements co-operated again in 1912, and again in 1913.

Each year saw a growing need for men to harvest the crop. The result was optimism to a degree never before experienced. The entire Saskatchewan economy was on the way up in keeping with the farmer's prosperity. Immigration increased by leaps and bounds as growing numbers of Europeans desired a piece of this land of promise. Building permits in the province rose from $17,857,308 in 1911 to $33,270,781 in 1912 while in the cities the increase was from $13,474,937 to $23,521,661.[1]

The absence of industrial unrest indicated that the province was in the middle of a period of economic expansion and overwhelming prosperity. During 1911 no strikes were recorded, almost as though the unions had paused to regain their wind after the events of the previous years. But 1912 saw the largest number of disputes up to that time as organized labour attempted to get a fair share of the affluence. This situation cannot be viewed as a picture of overall industrial unrest, however. All the strikes but one involved the building trades and all but one had as their cause a demand for an increase in wages.[2] All were of short duration, the longest lasting twenty-one days, and in all cases but one the settlement was amicable with at least some of the demands being granted. Essentially the same conditions prevailed in 1913, although there was a pronounced decrease in the number of disputes from fourteen in 1912 to five in 1913. The number decreased again to two in

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1. Bureau of Labour Report, 1912, p. 15.

2. The exception in the first case involved the telephone linemen and the exception in the second case was a jurisdictional dispute in which the bricklayers in Regina questioned the right of labourers to do pointing and washing of walls. Bureau of Labour Report, 1912, p. 41.

1914, a year in which prosperity ended unexpectedly as very dry weather during July and August caused the crops in the western part of the province and on newly homesteaded lands to be a total failure.

Another point of interest concerning the disputes during the years of prosperity was that, because of the nature of the demands, most were considered to be only the concern of the union on strike and little interest was expressed by the rest of the locals or by the trades councils. Peace and plenty allowed for the contemplation and definition of attitudes. These deserve some attention.

The attitudes and opinions expressed by organized labour were, in most cases, the products of a combination of economic necessity, sectional interest and tradition. And of these, it is difficult to say which was the primary cause of any specific attitude. Nor can it be said that any one opinion was unanimously concurred in by all trade unionists.

The one goal about which there was unanimity and of which the basis was economic necessity was the achievement of closed-shop working conditions. To work without non-union men alongside was a condition of employment enjoyed only by a chosen few. All trades attempted to have a closed-shop clause inserted in every contract they signed but, except for the Typos, they failed. But the struggle had to continue.

One instrument to put pressure on employers was the blacklist. Imposed by either the local or the trades council, it was used in an attempt to keep workers from jobs where wages or conditions were deemed to be unfair. However, because there was never any real dearth of

skilled labour the blacklist was never truly effective. The union label campaign was, in effect, a means of blacklisting. The label, along with the union badge and shop card, had as its main purpose the discouragement of the use of the products of non-union labour by designating which products were union made and which employees were union men.

> There is a "boycott" called the union label, which neither courts, militia or /sic/ Pinkerton can touch. It will abolish sweat-shops, scabs, unfair employers; it will mow a swath like a McCormack /sic/ reaper through the ills labor complains of. It requires neither strike, picketing or /sic/ trouble....[3]

Originating in San Franscisco in 1874 with the Cigarmakers' International Union, which was attempting to distinguish its product from that produced by Chinese labour, the idea caught on and spread. Each trades council, shortly after its formation, boasted a union label committee and efforts were made to publicize the various labels. Some jubilation was expressed when the provincial government gave the assurance that the union "bug" would appear on all government printing and when a government press was established only union men were employed. This was an empty victory, however, because except for a few one-man shops all the plants in the province were organized. As far as other trades were concerned the benefits of the union label campaign were not great because the average unionist was more interested in benefitting from a price bargain, even if the article did not bear the label, than in supporting a principle. Evidence of this is found in the following editorial in Saskatchewan Labor's Realm.

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3. Union Labor Advocate, Sept. 1903, p. 17.

> The printer who buys "scab" clothing because he can get it a little cheaper, must have cast iron nerve to complain of the man who goes to a non-union print shop for his work, because he can get it a little cheaper than the union shop can afford to do it. We have such men, however. We also have men holding offices and looking to increase their prominence with a plug of non-union chewing tobacco in their pocket.[4]

The label, service button and shop card were established to eliminate use of the products of non-union labour, but with a continual labour surplus this tended to be almost impossible. Consequently, the need presented itself of cutting down the influx of excess labour. In many cases individual employers advertised in eastern Canadian and European newspapers for workers, who, from the point of view of organized labour, tended only to make the labour situation more serious. Thus, this action was constantly coming under criticism from all levels of labour because with a flooded labour market wages would inevitably decline. In 1907 one of Regina's carpenters complained of the situation in the following manner:

> At the present time I believe there are about 170 carpenters who belong to one of the two unions /Amalgamated Society and United Brotherhood/, and it is a well known fact that the town is overstocked, yet we have contractors advertising in eastern papers for 250 carpenters and board of trade resolutions passed to the effect that there is a dearth of skilled labor in the country. Is it now time we took action and tried to stop such practices, and at least to give the lie direct to an effort to flood the country with surplus labor? Let the two unions combine on this and other questions which concern our welfare and work together for the good of the trade, and I am sure that we can by such means do much to help ourselves and our cause. The country has been prosperous and things have been good, yet the cost of living is high, and we should at least receive our share of the good things and not have to take what we can get because the town is flooded with surplus labor brought here by

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4. Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, July 19, 1907, p. 13.

misstatements, when there is plenty of men to do all the work in hand.[5]

Similar criticism was also levelled at such benevolent organizations as the Salvation Army and various church groups which sponsored the emigration of orphans from the London slums. Labour's complaint was not with the benevolent motive but with the fact that many of these orphans were snapped up by enterprising businessmen before they reached their designated destination on a farm in the area. Part of this evil was eliminated, however, in 1909 when the Saskatchewan Government passed a Factories Act prohibiting the employment of children under the age of fourteen years. Later, during the war, when generally depressed conditions had returned to the building trades, attempts were made by organized labour to have civic and provincial authorities legislate to prevent those men who came west to harvest the crop from remaining in urban centres to add further to the unemployment problem.

In contrast to the calculated anti-immigration campaign motivated by the excessive numbers of white workers to Saskatchewan, was the emotional quality of the campaign for the exclusion of Orientals. Originating with the trade union movement in California in the 1860's and the fear of losing jobs to the large numbers of Chinese entering the United States through west coast ports, the attack was shifted at the turn of the century against the more enterprising Japanese. The result was a long-standing feud between labour and the Japanese, characterized by a campaign to gain public sympathy on the part of the

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5. Ibid., June 28, 1907, p. 13.

former and a patient adamance on the part of the latter, with hatred and violence increasing each year. After 1913 the campaign spread to the entire American labour movement, with little distinction being made between the Japanese and Chinese. Constant reference was made to the "Yellow Peril", attributed to the "Asiatic races" which were "awakening from centuries of barbarism and embarking on the complete economic subjugation of the white races of the globe, imposing on them not only commercial supremacy, but the religions, customs, and institutions of the ancient world."[6]

For the growing number of opponents to Oriental immigration the only answer was exclusion, and they got a sympathetic hearing from numerous politicians. One of these was Elihu Root, who said on one occasion:

> Because I recognize my neighbour as a brother I am not thereby obliged to allow him to come into my yard and do what he wishes with my property, to plant his seeds in my garden and take what he can out of my soil.[7]

With such influential adherents exclusion was inevitable, and the hopes of the exclusionists were realized in 1924 with the passage of the Immigration Act.[8]

That western Canadian unionists were as susceptible to the emotional impact of the "Yellow Peril" as their American counterparts is suggested

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6. Excerpt from the New York People in The Voice, Sept. 1, 1905, p. 3.

7. Quoted from Dawson, R. MacGregor, William Lyon Mackenzie King, 1874-1923, Toronto, 1958, p. 193.

8. See Daniels, R., The Politics of Prejudice, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962 for a good account of the whole problem of Oriental exclusion.

by editorials like the following, designed to help the reader visualize the more odious features of Oriental production.

> How would you like to smoke the remainder of a cigar that had been smoked by a Chinaman. When you buy a trust cigar you do the same thing. Chinamen make a large proportion of them and moisten the point with their tongues to shape them up. In a union shop no workman is allowed to touch a cigar with his mouth, pure vegetable glue being used to stick the ends. Be sanitary; see the blue label is on the box before purchasing a cigar.[9]

The forces of right and sanitation were keeping a constant vigil against those of wrong and disease. But in western Canada belief in the "Yellow Peril" arose from indigenous circumstances as well as from the propaganda of American unionists. Thousands of Chinese had been imported to work on the C.P.R. as coolie labour during its arduous construction across Western Canada and many a story was told of the depressing conditions and danger in the construction camps, due to cheap labour. When the main line was completed many of the Chinese went into the laundry business and later some set up cafes. Throughout the whole period the newspapers (especially labour newspapers) were filled with stories of the degradation which was thought to be synonymous with the Oriental. White slavery, rape, filth and squalor -- all were publicized to such an extent that not only the biased unionist but also the average citizen believed these tales. There was no love lost. As one individual facetiously asked, "Why do away with the Orientals? Did not the Chinese funeral... the other day provide the citizens...with

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9. Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, May 31, 1907, p. 13.

the most spectacular procession that it was ever their lot to witness?"[10]

The attempts by the Canadian labour movement as a whole to have drastic restrictions placed on Oriental immigration met with some success, as the Lemieux agreement of December, 1907 gained a promise from the Japanese government that the number of immigrants from Japan would be curbed.[11] Further, to restrict the influx of the Chinese a $500 head tax was imposed by the Federal Government on all such immigrants.[12]

Locally, the Regina Trades and Labor Council wasted no time in climbing on the exclusionist bandwagon, and in August, 1907 it joined the newly-formed, Vancouver-centred Asiatic Exclusion League,[13] with J. D. Simson as its delegate. Under the auspices of this vocal body substantial pressure was exerted, and the Provincial Government proved to be attentive as the Federal administration had been. Under the provision of the Saskatchewan Elections Act those of the Chinese race were specifically excluded from the franchise. And when further representations were made to the Government, labour was happy to see the willingness with which it complied.

The most concerted campaign against Orientals took place in 1912 when in February the Saskatchewan executive of the Trades and Labor Congress waited upon the acting Premier, J. A. Calder, and the Honourable

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10. From Ibid., Nov. 27, 1907, p. 4.

11. Dawson, R. MacG., op. cit., p. 146.

12. Ibid., p. 193.

13. R. T. & L. C. Minutes, Aug. 10, 1907 meeting.

A. P. McNab to demand, among other things, that the Factories Act be amended to bring Chinese laundries under its provisions. The Saskatchewan executive also asked that an act be passed "prohibiting the employment of white girls or females by Orientals in restaurants, laundries, etc."[14] After due consideration the Cabinet promised on March 8 that legislation embodying labour's requests would be passed at the session then in progress.[15] The promise was kept and the legislation was upheld in a test case the same year.[16]

To stand in judgement on organized labour for making life miserable for those of Oriental birth would be easy with the detachment and wisdom of hindsight; but the fact still remains that the unionists were selfish. They honestly believed that the Oriental might disrupt all that was near and dear to them. They also believed that they were superior to the "yellow" race, despite the fact that this sentiment was inconsistent with their overall view of the basic dignity and equality of men, or at least of men who toiled for their bread.

Keir Hardie, in commenting on his tour of Canada in 1907, stated: "In the East the Trade Unionist has no use for Socialism, and in the West, beyond Winnipeg, only Socialists need apply."[17] Paul Fox's recent article, "Early Socialism in Canada," hears Hardie out.[18] The hodge-podge

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14. Bureau of Labour Report, 1912, pp. 34-5.

15. Ibid., pp. 36-7.

16. Ibid., pp. 41-2.

17. The Voice, Nov. 29, 1907, p. 1.

18. Fox, Paul, "Early Socialism in Canada", in The Political Process in Canada, (J. H. Aitchison, editor), University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1963.

of origins and legacies which made up early Canadian socialism seemed to find their most fertile ground in Winnipeg, British Columbia and in the Alberta coalfields. The emotionalism of British working-class socialism, the American brands of Eugene V. Debs, Daniel DeLeon and the I.W.W., and the diluted forms of continental Marxism were all contributors to the hybrid varieties of Canadian socialism, but which was the dominant strain was hard to ascertain because of the difference in doctrine between the various groups.

Although surrounded by pockets of socialist strength, Saskatchewan unionists seem to have been the least susceptible to the socialist doctrine of any in Western Canada. Granted, there were those who did see socialism as the primary goal to be pursued. Such men as W. E. Cocks of Regina and James Somerville and Edward Stephenson of Moose Jaw were the accepted leaders of socialist opinion in the province, continually speaking and writing, the latter even receiving the honour of having some of his articles published in The Voice. An excerpt from one of these, entitled "Quo Vadis?", shows his impatience with both moderate unionists and other socialist groups.

> Whenever an effort is made to draw moderate socialists and advanced laborites together into a common plan of action which will not interfere with the respective propagandas, the stereotyped phrases of socialism seem to be a stumbling block.
>
> Why is that? I ask the question because the present time seems to be a psychological moment among the labor reform movements in Canada. Most of the local labor parties are passive; the S.P. of C. /Socialist Party of Canada/ has had several hard lumps on the rocks recently, and not having changed its canvas, is nearer the breakers than ever before; minor restless independent movements have sprung up here and there and a sympathetic throng awaits the attraction of a feasible, harmonious comprehensive federation. And I ask it because I definitely know that this stumbling block stands like a spectre of the present....

> The workingmen of Canada can deliberately constitute themselves in a compact majority of the electorate whenever they take the notion. Or they can form and adhere to as many futile minorities as they please, and philosophize and antagonize to their heart's discontent and others' disgust.[19]

Stephenson's quill did little to win adherents to the movement, however. Although socialist parties were formed in all union centres in the province, all faced trying times from the moment of their formation with few members and fewer funds. The Regina Trades and Labor Council did condescend to allow the Regina Branch of the Socialist Party of Canada the use of the anteroom of Trades Hall free of charge because the Party could not afford to pay for the meeting hall and did not have enough members to warrant the expense.[20]

If reasons are sought for the rather cold reaction of rank-and-file unionists to doctrinaire socialism, two factors seem to be evident. As has been stated repeatedly, the basis for Saskatchewan unionism lay in the building trades in which there was no great hardship which could not be ameliorated by patience and collective bargaining. Unionists did advocate public ownership of all utilities but the collective ownership of all means of production was another matter. So also was the concept of economic determinism. Conversely, because of the lack of a large mining industry with its attendant hardships which bred a militant radicalism, there was little or no activity from such socialist-oriented unions as the I.W.W. - affiliated Western Federation of Miners.

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19. The Voice, Jan. 27, 1911, p. 1.

20. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Sept. 17, 1909 meeting.

The close contact between urban and agricultural workers which prevailed in the first two decades of this century also acted as a moderating influence. The farmer, too, wanted reforms -- in the freight rate structure, the tariff -- but in most cases his demands could be met within the existing framework of government. There was no wish to turn the system inside out so as to have a government composed only of those who toiled -- especially as the collective ownership of the means of production meant that land would be state controlled; this was unacceptable to the farmer, no matter how poor his land. True, there was also a minority within the agrarian community who chased rainbows such as the idea of group government, but most of this basically conservative group merely desired a more equitable distribution of wealth and parliamentary representation. Both farmer and unionist saw some wisdom in the advocacy of direct legislation, the initiative, referendum and recall, and also proportional representation, as means to alleviate existing evils, but doctrinaire socialism was too radical and the fragmentation of its advocates over specific policies made it confusing.

Thus, true socialists were few in number among organized labour and those who did follow the gospel usually formed debating societies, and even in these societies there was little demand for direct political action. Attempts were made to bring more adherents into the fold by sponsoring speakers. "Big Bill" Haywood" of Cripple Creek fame, who spoke in Regina on October 3, 1909, had been secretary of the Western Federation of Miners during the decade of labour unrest in Cripple Creek, Colorado. In 1906 he became an international celebrity when he was charged with the murder of former governor of Idaho, Frank Steunenburg along with Charles Moyer and George Pettibone. Others of lesser note

preceded or followed him. R. P. Pettipiece, a socialist M.L.A. in the British Columbia legislature, spoke in Moose Jaw on November 23, 1907 and Charlie O'Brien of the Alberta legislature spoke on the street in Regina in August, 1909 and was promptly thrown in jail for disturbing the peace.[21] But significantly, Keir Hardie never bothered to visit Saskatchewan.

Perhaps incidental to the mainstream of this study, but still significant in the story of the socialist organizers who tried to break the apathy of Saskatchewan unionists is the career of Honore Joseph Jaxon. Jaxon gave himself the apt title of "Agitator, Disturber, producer of plans to make men think, and Chronic Objector..." and he managed to live up to his own eulogy, without giving himself a chance to mellow with age. Even as a child he was rather precocious, the first one sought if mischief had been committed. Western Canada, and specifically the Prince Albert area to which he moved with his family in 1881, offered fertile ground for his personality, because of the unrest which was prevalent there at that time. A short sojourn among the discontented farmers in the District of Lorne led him into the arms of Louis Riel, for whom he became unofficial secretary. When the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 was thwarted and Riel hanged, Jaxon was committed to the mental institution at Selkirk, Manitoba, from which he escaped shortly after, following Riel's earlier route into the United States.

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21. The Morning Leader, Aug. 16, 1909.

Jaxon's experiences in the Chicago area, where he finally settled, brought him in contact with the labour movement to which he devoted the most fruitful years of his life, organizing, writing, lecturing and generally raising a stink wherever he went. A carpenters' council in the Chicago area was the first to benefit from his energy and from there he went on to become an organizer for the Knights of Labor. Before the turn of the century he became a delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor from a questionable organization called the Solicitors and Canvassers Union which he continued to represent until at least 1905.[22]

Within the Federation Jaxon was one of the most vocal members, continually attempting to break the conservatism which was inherent in that A. F. L. - affiliated central body. Some of his schemes were harebrained, such as his suggestion that those who were employed should take up land in order to give jobs to the unemployed who could not afford to homestead.[23] However, in most cases he acted as part of the radical conscience of the Federation, continually attacking what he felt to be injustice and apathy. The formation of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905 gave Jaxon the opportunity to join an organization which was more in keeping with his views. The Western Federation of Miners, affiliated with the I. W. W., became a body of special interest to Jaxon as he was a moving force behind a Moyer-Haywood defense committee established in Chicago.[24] In return, the W. F. M. sent Jaxon as a

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22. Cherwinski, W. J. C., "Honore Joseph Jaxon, Agitator, Disturber, producer of plans to make men think, and Chronic Objector...", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLVI, No. 2, (June 1965) pp. 122-33.

23. Ibid., p. 125.

24. See infra, p. 61.

fraternal delegate to the 1907 T. L. C. Convention in Winnipeg in September.

In the two decades that Jaxon had spent away from his native Canada his style of writing and delivery had matured, and with these his reputation for oratory had increased. Also, the headstrong boy who had carried a bowie knife through the streets of his native Wingham, Ontario now possessed a wealth of experience of the suffering which had befallen his fellow man, and which, he could only conclude, was due to the class struggle. In his first lecture tour, which he launched after the Winnipeg convention, Jaxon took it upon himself to inform Western Canadian unionists of the hardship which prevailed in the mines in the western United States. He interrupted the tour long enough to represent the Carlton Agricultural Society at the annual convention of Saskatchewan Agricultural Societies in Regina in the middle of December, 1907, at which he made a strong plea for greater farmer-labour co-operation.

After the conclusion of the tour he returned to the Carlton area where he ran in the 1908 Federal Election for the Prince Albert constituency as an Independent Liberal. Following his miserable showing (87 votes as compared to 2, 413 for the winner and 2,194 for the runner-up) he returned to the United States, only to come back to Western Canada in 1909 with a new scheme to benefit those who toiled.

Jaxon felt that the utopia for which the working men were striving was soon to arrive, and they had to be prepared to meet it. The task would be made easier if an open forum for the discussion of current topics could be provided and if these topics were supplemented by a

list of reading material of which every workingman should have a grasp. This was the rationale behind Jaxon's drive to have Producers' Social and Economic Circles established among organized labour in his adopted province. Moose Jaw, Regina and Saskatoon were visited with this end in mind; in the latter two discussion circles were established and the required reading matter was purchased by the local trades council. The list included the following: Kropotkin's Appeal to the Young, Simon's Philosophy of Socialism, The Communist Manifesto, Simon's Class Struggles in America, Engels' Socialism, Utopian or Scientific, Marx's Value, Price and Profit, Simon's The American Farmer, Lewis's Evolution, Social and Organic, Moore's The Universal Kinship, Trigg's The Changing Order, Marx's Capital.[25]

A flutter of interest followed in the wake of Jaxon's visits, more because of his dynamic personality than because of the nature of the gospel he was preaching, but as matters of more pressing concern came to the fore he was soon forgotten. Except by a handful of hoboes whom he had taken under his wing, Jaxon's death early in 1952 went virtually unnoticed. Trade unionists, in Saskatchewan at least, were too occupied with the present to concern themselves with the utopia which might be gained by merely discussing the relative merits of socialism, and they were not faced with conditions which warranted a more radical solution to their problems. The great majority of Saskatchewan unionists saw more wisdom in supporting the local section of the Canadian Labor Party, which advocated less long-term goals and promised more relief through a program geared to immediate needs.

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25. Cherwinski, W. J. C., op. cit., p. 131n.

Moose Jaw unionists were the first in Saskatchewan to think seriously of forming a branch of the Canadian Labor Party. Under the enthusiastic and capable guidance of Trades Council president James Somerville, a meeting was held early in October, 1906 to act on a resolution passed at the T.L.C. Convention in Victoria the previous month advocating the formation of local branches of the Labor Party.[26]

The primary purpose of the Moose Jaw branch seems to have been to co-ordinate political activity among organized labour on the municipal level and at its founding meeting it was proposed that a full ticket of candidates be nominated to fill three aldermanic seats as well as the mayoralty, which would be up for election in December. However, only two were nominated, Somerville and George Glassford. Both stressed local issues, demanding the placing of the local hospital under a municipal board of trustees, establishment of a board of health for the city, and extension of the franchise to those who did not pay property taxes.[27] Somerville himself made a special point of the way in which he had pursued the Mayor and City Council over the operation of the municipal light plant; but this was probably a reason for his defeat, as a large number of the citizens interpreted his pursuit as a personal vendetta. Some consolation was derived from Glassford's capture of the third seat on the City Council.[28]

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26. The Voice, Oct. 12, 1906, p. 1.

27. Moose Jaw Times, Dec. 7, 1906, p.8.

28. Ibid., Dec. 14, 1906, p. 6.

Following Glassford's unexpected success the Moose Jaw branch of the Labor Party made greater preparation for the 1907 civic contest, securing literature from Great Britain and the United States on municipal government with which to construct a sound election platform. To do the leg work necessary in the campaign, a committee was formed comprising one member from each union affiliated with the Trades and Labour Council.[29] Fred Gray (Railway Carmen) was chosen to contest the seat vacated by Glassford's departure for parts unknown and the platform on which he ran included the following: government of the city by a commission of three; municipal ownership, of the telephone system, the coal and wood yards and the hospital with a grant of $7,000 to assist the latter; the vote for poll-tax payers; no bonuses to civic employees; a new city charter; justice to the South Hill district in matters of public improvement; and the construction of an overhead bridge across Moose Jaw Creek.[30] However, despite all the effort put forth by the party Gray was defeated.

The Regina Branch of the Canadian Labor Party, formed almost a year after the one in Moose Jaw, differed from the latter in three major respects. While the branch in Moose Jaw worked closely with the Trades and Labor Council there, the party in Regina was "in no way connected with the Trades and Labour /sic/ Council or with the trades /sic/ unionists generally of the city. It is purely a political party, instituted in the interest of the toiling masses and with a platform

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29. The Voice, Nov. 29, 1907, p. 1.

30. Moose Jaw Times, Dec. 3, 1907, p. 2.

that should appeal to all men who are dependent on their own energies and the wills of their masters for bread."[31]

The platform referred to probably conformed closely to those of similar branches in other centres; it called for free compulsory education, eight hour day and six day week, public ownership of all utilities, Oriental exclusion, the union label on all government supplies, abolition of property qualifications for public office, proportional representation and direct legislation.[32] But as a political party the Regina Branch fell short of its Moose Jaw counterpart. The platform became the basis for questionnaires submitted to candidates of the existing parties[33] and no candidates were ever nominated to run for office on any level. Instead, the party soon degenerated into a debating society, meeting every second Sunday to listen to "a series of lectures and debates on current topics of importance to all working men."[34] Lectures and debates were presented on most of the planks of the party's platform, but the topic which seemed to cause the greatest controversy was that of temperance and its various ramifications.

While the temperance movement never enjoyed the unqualified support of organized labour, powerful voices in trade unionism were raised against the more conspicuous evils associated with "demon rum." Samuel Gompers, for example, affirmed that "The time has come when the saloon

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31. Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Nov. 1, 1907, p. 1.

32. Ibid., Aug. 2, 1907, p. 12.

33. Ibid., Dec. 6, 1907, p. 3.

34. Ibid., Nov. 1, 1907, p. 4.

and the labor movement must be divorced." And John P. Lennon, Treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, declared:

> The purpose of the trade union is to raise the standard of living. What about the saloon? Is there a man who will dare to say there is any influence from the saloon except to lower this standard, and make man less manly and women less womanly? I don't know a solitary principle for which the labor movement stands but that the saloon is on the other side of the question.[35]

Organized labour, or at least its leaders, seemed to see in demon rum a devious capitalist plot on two levels. Aside from the properties of "booze", the fact that such a desired commodity was manufactured and sold as a private enterprise was viewed with hostility because of the financial gain which accrued from its sale. Those who were more conscious of the class struggle feared that liquor was merely a vehicle used by the opponents of labour to distract the movement from its foreordained role of uplifting the working classes. For these "it's not a question of temperance exactly, but of guarding against men who ought to know better being chloroformed by the agencies of the enemy."[36]

> Labor has its special reasons for regarding the drink traffic as one of its worst enemies. To the extent to which the resources of the laboring classes are wasted on liquor the problem of unemployment injuriously affects wages and the standard of labor conditions.
>
> The strength of the bargaining power of labor depends mainly upon keeping down the competition of the unemployed. The workman who spends his money on drink is not helping to support useful employment. / On the contrary, he is assisting to employ labor in producing a commodity which is unnecessary, unproductive, wasteful and injurious. There never was a greater fallacy put forward than to assert that if the traffic were abolished wages would fall because the cost of living had been reduced.

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35. The Voice, March 3, 1916, p. 6.

36. R. P. Pettipiece in Ibid., June 5, 1908, p. 10.

> The man who drinks has a lower standard of living than the total abstainer. It is the latter who keeps up wages by keeping up the standard of working class life, by insisting upon better housing, better food, better clothing, holidays, education, and other useful and productive forms of expenditure.[37]

For still others the primary concern was with temperance as a means of uplifting mankind as a whole. They claimed they could see the degradation, squalor, and hardship that had as its root the liquor traffic.

> Three-fourths of the sin and misery of this world can be traced directly to the influence of strong drink. Idleness, disorder, pauperism and crime exist in some degree at least as a result of the liquor traffic.... It has been in the hands of men who have regard for the health or happiness of the people long enough, and it is now time that the whole business was placed in the hands of men who would have a care for the nation's welfare, and who would conduct the traffic not for the sake of the profit to be derived therefrom, as is the case at present without regard to the welfare of the people, but for the same amount of profit that would accrue from the handling of any other legitimate article of commerce or merchandise, and who should be best fitted for that task than men of clean morals, and righteous hearts -- the guides and shepherds of the people, who would be beyond reproach, and who would remain free from the contamination by contact with that traffic, and who have nothing to gain but censure by the propagation of the gospel of "let-alone" which they have recently maintained.[38]

The Saskatchewan trade union movement showed itself to be susceptible to some or all of the reasons put forward for the banishment of the bar. But alas, in many cases the end that was desired was not achieved in practice. Also, one may suspect, though supporting evidence is unavailable, that there was a gradual change in the attitude of organized labour toward the liquor trade and toward temperance as a

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37. Philip Snowden (British Labor M.P.) in Ibid., March 3, 1916, p. 6.

38. Editorial in Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Jan. 17, 1908, p. 1.

greater number of individuals from eastern Europe entered the ranks and worked themselves into executive positions in the few years immediately prior to the war.

In any event there seems to have been a change in the prevailing attitude of organized labour to the liquor question during the high point in the campaign by various elements in Saskatchewan society to have the bar banished. To all intents and purposes Saskatchewan was temperance country. Most of her citizens had come only a few years before from the dry American Mid-West and of these a number had heard about or even witnessed the hatchet antics of Carrie Nation and her Home Defenders. Nearly every town of any size had as one of its first organizations a chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. "Booze" was considered bad, and when it was sold to the unaware aborigines it was especially iniquitous. Many union leaders in the period before 1912 expressed this sentiment, especially those of Anglo-Saxon background. However, liquor seemed to be an integral part of the companionship which union membership offered. Smokers were planned as often as finances allowed and were awaited with avid anticipation. Sometimes things got out of hand and of necessity measures had to be taken to prevent recurrences. After an especially wild smoker late in 1907 the Regina Trades and Labor Council prohibited the use of "intoxicating beverages of any kind" at smokers held in Trades Hall in order to protect the Council's property.[39]

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39. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Nov. 23, 1907 meeting.

On other occasions some unionists carried their imbibing beyond the smoker and the Saskatoon Typographical Union No. 663 thus had to decree that any member attending "a union meeting in an intoxicated condition and disturbing meeting be fined $2.00".[40]

Although some unionists bore a righteous attitude toward the liquor trade an increasing majority favoured its use with moderation. Prohibition was not the goal. Rather, unionists advocated government ownership of sales outlets for this lucrative commodity. Though specific reasons were not given, three seem obvious. With government control the sale of "green" or inferior quality liquors would be prevented. As well, the Provincial government would give preference to the products of local breweries and distilleries. The main benefit to be gained from government control, however, seemed to be that the large profits gleaned from liquor sales could be used for the public benefit.

Although unionists were relatively apathetic toward prohibition, because they were generally linked with the reformist element their support was continually solicited for various temperance projects. On November 9, 1907 the Reverend E. A. Henry of the Presbyterian Church in Regina and the Reverend J. G. Shearer (of the same denomination) from Toronto spoke to a meeting of the Regina Trades and Labor Council concerning the formation of a Moral and Social Reform Council with the expressed intention of "unifying...the Christian churches and temperance organizations of the province for the purpose of waging active and

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40. Saskatoon Typographical Union #663 Minutes, Oct. 4, 1913 meeting.

aggressive warfare against the liquor traffic.[41] Because the Trades Council had voiced support for government ownership of liquor outlets, the two gentlemen felt that that body should be represented at the founding convention because public ownership would be a plank in the Reform Council's program.[42] With these assurances the Regina Council joined its Moose Jaw counterpart in accepting the invitation to the convention.

When the convention met on December 14, 1907 to form the Moral and Social Reform Council, the union delegates (Somerville and Fred Gray from Moose Jaw and Hugh Peat from Regina) found themselves in the presence of the sanctified -- Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, plus the W.C.T.U. and Royal Templars. All were armed with invective against the evils of drink. The labour delegates were the last on the agenda to speak, and when they expressed only limited support in the following comments there were few who agreed with them.

> That we were in perfect accord and sympathy with the moral and social reform movement in so far as it sought to eliminate the evils attendant on the public bar and the treating system; also that we were unanimously in favor of Government ownership of the liquor traffic as formulated by Dr. Shearer in the recent address to the Regina Trades and Labor Council.[43]

Government ownership had been lost in the passion to kill the liquor traffic. The result was the adoption by the convention of two

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41. Moose Jaw Times, Dec. 7, 1907, p. 1.

42. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Nov. 9, 1907 meeting.

43. Regina Daily Standard, Dec. 17, 1907, p. 6.

items of policy.

> (1) The abolition of the bar, the prohibition of public treating, permitting only the sale in sealed packages to be consumed elsewhere than on the premises.
> (2) Giving to the municipality the option of having the sale of liquor within its bounds or the prohibition of it altogether by a majority of votes cast.[44]

For organized labour the Moral and Social Reform Council had "practically endorse/d/ the monopoly of the wholesale liquor business"[45] by leaving it in private hands, and its three delegates immediately dissociated themselves from the Council. From this time on repeated reference was made to the fact that labour had been misled by the temperance proponents and the suspicion of the Reform Council which resulted was carried over to its successor, the Social Service Council.[46]

While government control of liquor sales remained continuously in the platform of organized labour throughout the period covered by this study, the advocates of outright prohibition decreased in number. When temperance forces mustered their numbers for a concerted drive for prohibition in the province in 1914 and 1915 they again attempted to solicit the support of organized labour, but they received even less attention than before. In February, 1914 the newly formed Banish the Bar Campaign Committee approached the Regina Trades Council with a view to obtaining three representatives from the Council to work in conjunction with the Committee. The reception given the Committee's paid representative, William J. Martin, was cold, however, and the

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44. Moose Jaw Times, Dec. 17, 1907, p. 1.

45. Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Dec. 20, 1907, p. 1.

46. The Voice, July 2, 1915, 5. The R.T. & L.C. did, however, send delegates to the Social Service Council.

request was refused.[47] The Committee met with the same failure in Moose Jaw, as the Trades Council there vetoed a similar proposal.[48] When the Banish the Bar Committee achieved its desired end with the temperance plebiscite and the consequent closing of all liquor outlets at the end of 1916, there was no discussion of the subject by organized labour. However, when the Brewery and Soft Drink Workers began a campaign in 1918 to replace 2½ proof temperance beer with 2½ per cent by weight beer, Saskatchewan unionists reacted favourably but not enthusiastically.[49]

Although Saskatchewan unionists were not enthusiastic about prohibition, there was little antagonism toward the W.C.T.U., as indicated by the fact that they worked together to obtain the vote for women. Seeing the vote for women as a means of balancing the legislative power of men, the W.C.T.U. was always the first proponent of women's suffrage. However, in Saskatchewan the issue was never very prominent. Most citizens believed in the wisdom of woman suffrage because the weaker sex had worked shoulder to shoulder with their husbands in opening up the West. Thus it was thought to be merely a matter of time until they would gain the franchise.

The first concrete impetus for woman suffrage came through the education program of the Homemakers' Clubs sponsored by the extension department of the University of Saskatchewan beginning in 1910. In

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47. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Feb. 9, 1914 meeting.

48. Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders and Helpers Moose Jaw #478 Minutes, Apr. 13/14 meeting.

49. See R.T. & L.C. correspondence, 1917. See also infra, p. 106.

1912 the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association and its organ, the Grain Growers' Guide, endorsed the principle and pressure on the Provincial government was initiated. Organized labour, while also supporting the principle, stood on the sidelines, allowing the S.G.G.A. and the women themselves through their Political Equality Leagues, to take the initiative. Only once, when their help was needed, was an active part taken. In May, 1915 W. E. Cocks endorsed a giant petition to the Provincial government on behalf of the Saskatchewan executive of the Trades and Labor Congress, along with J. B. Musselman of the Grain Growers,[50] on the only occasion that labour participated actively.

Perhaps the endorsation by organized labour of women suffrage was partly due to the fact that the working man had received the franchise within the living memory of many unionists. However, support of the vote for women was not an isolated sentiment but part of the whole movement for greater democracy. The principle covered the whole spectrum of direct democracy, including porportional representation, the initiative, referendum and recall, as well as other desired reforms such as the removal of the property qualification in civic elections.

There was little difference of opinion among organized labour throughout North America as to the advantages of direct legislation. The American Federation of Labor had as one of its principles the achievement of the "Initiative, referendum, imperative mandate and right of recal /sic/."[51] The initiative and referendum had been "legislated

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50. Cleverdon, C.L., The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, Toronto, 1950, p. 80.

51. Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Nov. 22, 1907, p. 3.

upon" by the T. L. C. even prior to 1892[52] and numerous references were made to them in various resolutions until 1899, when the initiative and referendum went into the Platform of Principles.[53] Proportional representation was also considered by the T. L. C. as early as 1896 and in 1899 it too went into the Congress's platform.[54] In 1901 proportional representation was lumped into the same resolution as direct legislation.[55]

The reasons for all levels of government to adopt direct legislation were obvious to most unionists. As an editorial in Labor's Realm stated:

> Direct legislation is essential to self government in complex communities -- a necessary element in a true democracy....The fundamental questions are, shall the people rule or be ruled? Shall they own the Government, or be owned by it?...Direct legislation answers these questions in favor of the people, and is the only measure that can answer them that way, except a miraculous conversion of politicians to wisdom and angelhood.
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> It makes for political purity, a quality so shamefully lacking in political life. It puts a stop to corrupt legislation and destroys the concentration of temptation which exists where a few legislators can take final actions on franchise, etc.... The power of bribery will be infinitely diluted....The lobby will die; rings, and bosses will lose their power; blackmailing bills and franchise steals will go out of fashion....
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> Better men will be attracted to political life. The purer politics become the more attractive they will become to good men, and the less attractive to bad men....
>
> It will lessen the power of partisanship....
>
> It will educate the people, intellectually and morally -- more responsibility, more discussion of measures and public affairs, wherefore more understanding, more sympathy and civic patriotism, more mind, morals and manhood.

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52. Proceedings, 1892, p. 23.

53. Ibid., 1899, pp. 26-7.

54. Ibid., 1896, pp. 19-20 and 1899, p. 27.

55. Ibid., 1901, p. 81.

> It will elevate the press -- voting will turn more on reason, and mud will be less in demand in the political market.
> It will stop class legislation and give the people their rights....
> It is the open door of progress. Reforms will come as fast as people desire them, without organizing or conquering a political party to carry out each advance, or waiting till the plutocrats and political bosses are ready for the curtain to go up.[56]

Although the initial interest in direct legislation in Saskatchewan probably came from labour, the farming community "carried the ball" as far as publicity and pressure on government was concerned. Their desires were somewhat different -- tariff reform, changes in the freight rate structure, conservation of natural resources -- but the root of the evil was the same for the farmers as for the labourer: a government allegedly controlled by big business.

Because of the dominant numerical position of the farming community in the province and the resources at its disposal, such as the Grain Growers' Guide, the labouring community could not help but take a back seat, although the heart of the labourer was still in it, nevertheless.

The campaign reached a peak in May, 1912 with the formation of a Direct Legislation League for the province devoted to the implementation of the initiative, referendum and recall in Saskatchewan. After gauging the political wind Premier Scott found it politically expedient to pledge the support of his Liberal party to direct legislation. Therefore, in December the Government introduced Bill 44, "An Act to provide for the initiative or approval of Legislation by the Electors."

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56. Labor's Realm, April 1, 1910, pp. 7-8.

However, later in the session there was a tendency for Scott's administration to back away from formal advocacy of the legislation and the Premier assured his party that there was no political significance to the bill.[57]

The direct legislation bill (revised later in the session and re-submitted as Bill 75) did, however, have great significance for the Direct Legislation League and it continued to push for the bill's adoption, soliciting support of the province's Trades and Labor Councils in its campaign. However, when the bill was submitted to the electorate for ratification on November 27, 1913 it received only 16.52 per cent of the eligible votes, far short of the 30 per cent necessary.[58] There was sincere disappointment in the camp of the Direct Legislation League at the lack of interest shown in Bill 75 but despite its attempts to bring the issue to the fore in later years no further action was ever taken to implement direct legislation in the province.

It is interesting to note that the poorest turnout for the referendum occurred in the cities (953 out of 6,431 eligible votes in Regina and 624 of 5,243 in Saskatoon[59]), which tends to indicate that rank-and-file unionists were among those who were not extremely interested. The leaders among organized labour who strongly advocated direct legislation probably kicked themselves for not using their influence to greater advantage, but in the meantime they consoled themselves with the opinion

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57. Chambers, J.E., "The Use of the Plebiscite and Referendum in Saskatchewan," unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1965, p. 54.

58. Ibid., p. 59.

59. Ibid.

that the November 27 returns were "a very emphatic endorsation of the principle considering how little effort was made to get out the vote."[60]

In fact organized labour in Saskatchewan was generally quite content to console itself with only partial gains on most issues. Except in areas where their economic prosperity was directly affected, most rank-and-file unionists never got overly excited over any cause they sanctioned. Only the idealists pursued all causes with equal enthusiasm. The rest contented themselves with being individuals first and unionists second.

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60. The Voice, Feb. 27, 1914, p. 6.

CHAPTER 3

THE SEARCH FOR A UNIFYING FACTOR

Two significant observations can be made concerning the attitudes adopted by organized labour in Saskatchewan during its formative years. Because of the economic origin of most of these attitudes, they were readily forgotten once the needs were satisfied -- either by legislation or by a change in circumstances. An example is in the problem of Oriental exclusion, which ceased to be an issue some time in the 1920's when the law placed restrictions on immigration. Secondly, few of the attitudes adopted by labour gained unanimous support within the movement. For example, opinions on the question of the liquor traffic ranged from those who agreed with R. P. Pettipiece that "there is too much boozing going on in what is known as the Labour movement"[1] to the contrary views of those who were the unfortunate objects of such comments. Yet the underlying design of the trade union movement was to put forth a united front on all issues.

This lack of unity hampered the basic effectiveness of the entire trade union movement. Bona fide unionists recognized the importance of unity, not only for themselves but for workers as a whole, in the face of a growing unity among management with the formation of organizations such as the Builders' Exchange and the Chamber of Commerce. Underlying the periodic organization drives was a feeling of a duty to organize the unorganized. But the superiority of organization had to be demonstrated and this in turn necessitated a united conscience among the ranks of organized labour.

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1. R. P. Pettipiece in The Voice, June 5, 1908, p. 10.

In the formative years the search for a unifying factor among unionists was aided by the fact that the local union performed a dual role. In fact, in the public eye, the local union in many cases received more publicity for its social functions than for its economic role of negotiating for its membership. As fraternal societies, most of the craft brotherhoods vied with the Masons, the Rotarians and men's church organizations in offering fellowship and benevolent benefits. Meetings were conducted according to strict ritual. Passwords were used to signify membership. In some cases elaborate regalia were used to signify various positions and special reverence was paid to the intricately inscribed charter. Apart from the monthly meeting was the smoker, held periodically to allow the membership to "let loose", and the annual or semi-annual ball for the benefit of the wives. But, by and large, union functions were masculine affairs until women's auxiliaries and a Women's Labor League were formed. Four members of the latter organization were seated on the Regina Trades and Labor Council on April 28, 1919 and they concurred in almost all suggestions put forth by the executive, partly because of the fact that the League was composed of the wives of most of the city's union leaders.[2]

A search for unity of purpose among trade unionists was the basis for the entire hierarchy of union organization from the local to the national federation. Local unions grouped themselves together along vocational and geographic lines. For example, when enough locals were organized in a specific area to deal with the various aspects of the

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2. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, April 28, 1919 meeting, Morning Leader, April 29, 1919, pp. 9, 11.

printing trades, a printing trades council was formed. Similarly, those unions connected with the construction industry formed themselves into building trades councils. On a wider geographic basis, these locals of the International Typographical Union west of the Great Lakes formed the Western Canada Conference of Typographical Unions to deal with problems indigenous to the printing trades within that area. However, because the problems of these federations were the problems of their respective trades, they will not be dealt with here. Instead, more emphasis will be placed on the unifying element provided by the various trades and labor councils and the Saskatchewan executive of the Trades and Labor Congress (the latter operating in lieu of a provincial federation), which were more representative of over-all union sympathy within a given area, regardless of trade.

Because of the individual differences between the unions which sent delegates to the trades and labour council, seldom was there a unanimous vote on any issue. Besides the impact of individual personalities, such factors as the size of the local, the amount of per capita dues it paid, the difficulty it was having with management, the ethnic background of its membership, the seasonal nature of the trade represented, the rigidity of its constitution, the strength of its international, and the numbers of years that the local had been in operation, all affected the manner in which the delegates of the local would vote on any issue. Yet, as far as publicity was concerned, there was a constant attempt to give the appearance of unity. Opinions were canvassed by correspondence prior to the actual discussion and when a particularly divisive issue was on the agenda the meeting was held <u>in camera</u> and a press release issued at the appropriate time.

The first Monday in September presented the ideal opportunity for organized labour in any city to show its united strength, and in the first few years no time or expense was spared to put on a good show. In 1907, the first year that the Regina Trades and Labor Council operated effectively, the sky was the limit with regard to demonstrating union solidarity. All affiliated unions began preparations at least a month ahead through their respective Labor Day Committees, under the co-ordination of the Council's committee. All union men were to march in a parade with some locals providing floats. Some marchers were to be garbed in special costumes, while the more austere were satisfied with badges. To ensure complete attendance most locals followed the example of the plumbers, who decided to fine "all members not turning out on parade $5, the same fine to be inflicted on any man turning out in any other than sober condition."[3] The parade, when assembled on September 2, stretched for more than a mile and included 1,000 unionists from Regina and Moose Jaw.[4]

On the reviewing stand were seated Regina's Mayor Smith, F. J. Bole, M. L. A. and local businessmen, C. H. Gordon and E. MacArthy, their decision being that the most impressive float belonged to the Moose Jaw Carmen. With the termination of the parade, speeches were presented in the C. P. R. park, followed by three cheers for the provincial government. The afternoon festivities included various track and field events, a demonstration of bronco-busting and an inter-city

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3. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Aug. 31, 1907 meeting.

4. The Morning Leader, Sept. 3, 1907, p. 1.

baseball game which was won by the Regina contingent.[5]

Saskatchewan unionists had achieved the desired end in this, the "first provincial Labor Day demonstration held in the Dominion."[6] A large portion of Regina's citizenry had viewed the proceedings with interest and The Leader lauded the orderly nature of the celebration in comparison with past May Day demonstrations held in Europe.

> Regina may well be proud of the fact that a public holiday like yesterday, should pass without its being necessary for the police to make a simple /sic/ arrest. With thousands of people thronging the city, it would have been reasonable to expect some trifling disturbance of the peace and that nonesuch took place speaks well for the sobriety and even-temperedness of the people of the plains. We believe that there are few cities that could furnish a similar record. The fact, too, speaks well for organized labor, showing as it does that the ranks of unionism are not (to use Roosevelt's term) filled with "undesirables," but rather with desirable citizens.[7]

Labor Day, 1908 saw Regina unionists descend on Moose Jaw to return the favour of the previous year, and in 1909 individual celebrations were held in both centres, while Saskatoon held its first show of strength. However, enthusiasm was waning; increasing numbers of the province's unions took advantage of the public holiday to sponsor individual picnic excursions to one of the province's beaches and some neglected the day completely. The Trades and Labor Council in Regina continued to sponsor various activities to maintain union interest among its affiliates. Parades, track and field events, cross-country runs

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5. Ibid., pp. 1, 5.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 4.

and football tournaments were spotlighted at various Labor Days, but even the Council condescended to hold its celebration at Saskatchewan Beach in 1915.[8]

Although Labor Day festivities were greeted with enthusiasm during the first few years of Saskatchewan unionism and went a long way toward welding unionists together, the resulting interest could not be sustained in the interim between Septembers. Realizing this, the same enthusiastic group within the Regina Trades and Labor Council who were to make the province's first Labor Day celebration such a success decided to initiate Saskatchewan's first (and only) newspaper devoted to the interests of organized labour. Under the capable editorship of Hugh Peat (I.T.U. No. 657 delegate, Trades Council's corresponding secretary, Regina's correspondent to the Labor Gazette and later the proprietor of The Caxton Press) the first number of Saskatchewan Labor's Realm was delivered to Trades Hall on May 31, 1907. Although the Realm was designed for all unionists in the province, its main body of subscribers came from Regina's 450 unionists, and with this fact in mind it must be stated that it was an amazing little newspaper. With the Voice as its model, the Realm carried everything a good unionist should know. News items from the labour world, editorials, lectures, clippings from other labour newspapers, and advertisements which told the unionist where he could purchase union-made products. Considering that this attempt at labour journalism was largely a volunteer effort, the calibre of writing and organization was high, the reason being

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8. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, July 26, 1915 meeting.

perhaps best explained by Hugh Peat in the first issue.

> We would have our readers to understand from the outset that this paper is not being issued merely as a money making venture. It is to a large extent a labor of love. A labor from which no worker should shrink. For what greater ideal; what nobler ambition can be desired than the emancipation and aggrandisement of labor. Ever ready are we to touch the hat and bow the knee to pomp and plenty, to the leisured classes, the unworking aristocracy, so called, but how seldom do we find the meagrest tribute to labor from which they evolve and without which they could not be.[9]

After the first few editions the Regina Council began to realize that a weekly newspaper was perhaps too ambitious a scheme for such a small centre as Regina, especially as initial enthusiasm began to wane. Having reached a peak with its Labor Day 1907 edition, the calibre of the Realm began to depreciate as more and more emphasis was placed on "gleanings" rather than on local reporting and editorializing, until finally the paper succumbed with its July 31, 1908 edition. The Council, however, was not willing to give up so easily, and within a year, on May 1, 1909, a monthly newspaper appeared under the name of Labor's Realm. However, it ceased as a monthly publication after twelve issues. From 1913 until well into the 1940's, Labour's Realm was published as a souvenir yearbook in conjunction with Labor Day.

Many who did not have much faith in the unifying property of a newspaper felt that the funds expended would be better spent on a home for organized labour. Initially, a number of the locals held their meetings in someone's house or in rented quarters, the size of the meeting hall being determined by the local's membership or by its

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9. Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, May 31, 1907, p. 6.

financial position. As a result, meeting places were spread out all over the city and, except for writen correspondence, the chance meeting, and the Trades and Labor Council meetings, there was very little contact between the various locals. In an attempt to remedy this situation, the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union in Regina purchased a hall on Dewdney Avenue in March, 1907, which they rented out to the city's unions and to the Regina Trades and Labor Council at a reasonable price. However, although the Bricklayers' hall was called Trades Hall, it remained a poor excuse for the real thing and the dream of a bona fide labour temple remained in the minds of all conscientious unionists.

The dream of unionists in all cities, in fact, was to have their offices in a labour temple comparable to Vancouver's, reputed to be the finest such edifice in North America[10] but most of the structures actually built fell far short of this goal. For example, the Saskatoon Labour Temple, the first temple in the province raised in the cause of labour unity, was erected in 1911 at a cost of a mere $4,000, even though the Saskatoon Labour Temple Company was incorporated with a capital of $50,000 made up of one dollar shares.[11] Although the facilities provided for Saskatoon unionists were far from luxurious, the quarters were comfortable and adequate for the number of unionists in the Hub City at the time. In contrast, the initial plans of Regina unionists were rather unrealistic.

When the matter of a home for Regina's labour unions first came up

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10. Report on Labour Organization, 1913, pp. 188.

11. Ibid., p. 189.

for discussion in the Regina Trades and Labor Council in July, 1911, the Council acted almost as though it were performing a public service by building a temple and requested the City to donate a site for this purpose.[12] City Council must not have realized the great public benefit to be derived from such a building because Trades Council next turned to the Provincial Government. Its request for a building site shows the grandiose nature of the plans. As a spokesman for the Council put it to the Deputy Minister of Public Works:

> I was requested by a mass meeting of organized labour to ask for a grant of a building site for the purpose of a Labour Temple within the City of Regina. The building would be used for a home of the various locals, & also for educational, & recreative purposes. In the event of the grant being made we should be prepared to erect a handsome building & lay out the grounds in lawns, tennis courts, etc. In doing this we believe it would be to the advantage of all workers as then they would have somewhere to go to instead of as at present gathering around the bars of the town & so benefiting the people both phisically /sic/ & morally.[13]

Undaunted by the Government's refusal, the Council proceeded on its own and the Regina Labor Temple Joint Stock Company was incorporated early in 1913 with assets of $500,000 made up of 10,000 shares at $5.00 each.[14] The city's unions were approached both for donations and to buy stock. Similar solicitations were made to the city's politicians. To supplement these sources a vaudeville show was sponsored from which

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12. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, July 21, 1911 meeting.

13. George Peake (Sec. Treas. R.T. & L.C.) to Deputy Minister of Public Works, May 4, 1912. Public Works files, #61 (Inquiries re Miscellaneous Matters, 1903-26) SA

14. Report on Labour Organization, 1913, p. 190.

$104.60 was raised,[15] followed by several dances and whist drives. When the temple was officially opened early in 1915, it bore little similarity to the initial vision, as expediency and financial restrictions had prevailed. There was neither lawns nor tennis courts, but merely a grey frame building with several meeting rooms and a number of offices. But the effort put forth by Regina unionists was relatively significant in comparison with that of Moose Jaw unionists who are dreaming of home to this date.

A unified stand by the members of a union local was necessary when it came to negotiating with an employer. The same held true for a city's unionized working force as a whole when it came to offering moral and financial support to a labouring brotherhood which was disputing with management. There was no serious difficulty in mobilizing unionists in these cases because their bread and butter were directly threatened. However, when the objective was indirect, as was the case with the profits to be gained through favourable legislation, assistance was less quick in coming and it was for this purpose that labour day celebrations were organized, newspapers published and buildings erected. How effective unionists were in influencing legislative measures it is difficult to gauge but on the whole most governing bodies seemed to be aware of the desires of organized labour.

The municipal and provincial governments were the two levels which organized labour could effectively influence. The federal government

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15. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Feb. 14, 1913 meeting.

was left to the T.L.C. In the urban areas the local Trades and Labor Councils kept a close watch on all civic affairs and did not hesitate to voice the opinion of organized labour if something was desired or if an injustice had been committed. For example, in Regina the Trades Council waged a continuous though unsuccessful campaign to have comfort stations constructed throughout the city for the convenience of the citizens.

The Regina Council's hardest fought and most successful battle in the realm of civic affairs concerned the city's street railway system. By 1910 the city had grown to the point that it could afford a street railway but the question was whether the proposed system should be privately or public owned. Private ownership of utilities was contrary to all that unionists believed in. It had long been a principle of all labour platforms that utilities be operated by the government and Regina unionists deemed the street railway to be a public utility.

In defence of the principle of public ownership the Regina Trades and Labor Council joined the fray in February by passing a resolution opposing private ownership of the system.[16] In the middle of March a campaign in the local press was initiated to prevent the franchise from falling into private hands.[17] In April a number of public meetings were held under Trades Council auspices "with the view to organizing a protest against the proposed gift of our Street Railway Franchise."[18]

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16. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Feb. 18, 1910 meeting.

17. Ibid., March 18, 1910 meeting.

18. Ibid., April 15, 1910 meeting.

Finally, the Council's hopes were realized on July 28, 1911 when the street railway began operations as the first municipally owned utility in the province.

The provincial government was never pursued with the same vengeance as were local authorities. As one Regina labour leader stated, "So far as the local legislature was concerned labor had no ground for complaint. What little they had asked they had got and altogether they had received good treatment."[19] The Scott administration and later that of W. M. Martin tended to be quite liberal and therefore sympathetic to the needs of organized labour. Pressure on the provincial government usually took one of two forms. Either a polite letter was sent requesting a special favour or the redress of a specific grievance, or the Saskatchewan executive of the T.L.C. petitioned the Cabinet annually (usually around January) so that the government could be made aware of the legislation labour desired.

In most cases the more reasonable demands were eventually placed on the statute books. The 1911 report of the Bureau of Labour outlined the general framework which governed policy in respect to the province's working men.

> The amelioration of the conditions of those who toil may be accomplished in many ways, but subjects of prime importance to the toiler are the securing of wages earned, protection for both body and health while at work and compensation for accidents received in the course of his employment.[20]

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19. Saskatchewan Labor's Realm, Oct. 25, 1907, p. 1.

20. Bureau of Labour Report, 1911, p. 65.

There was little legislation passed during the Territorial period pertaining to workmen, mainly because there were few workmen. The formation of the province in 1905 coincided with an expansion in the construction industry and with the formation of unions which were not connected with the railway trades.

The first concern of the Scott administration in reference to labour legislation seemed to be to guarantee the payment of a fair living wage by employers, at least on jobs involving public money. The rationale behind this was that salaries on government works would set the standard for all wages in the province. The Railway Act passed in 1906 made it compulsory that all railway companies receiving subsidies or guarantees from the provincial government for construction work pay a "fair and reasonable rate." The provision of a fair wage clause was later extended to cover all contracts awarded by any branch of the Saskatchewan government. The criterion in this case was the wage generally accepted in the district where the work was being done.[21]

To ensure that employees received full payment for their services the Masters' and Servants Act (1904), the Mechanics' Lien Act (1907), the Thresher Employees' Act (1908-9) and the Woodmen's Lien Act (1908) were passed by the legislature in the first few years of the province (except the Masters' and Servants Act which was a Northwest Territories statute). Although these acts were on the periphery of labour legislation they indicate the government's concern for the working man. But with the ever increasing amount of labour legislation came the need

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21. Ibid., p. 66.

for adequate administration. As a result, one of Saskatchewan's most prominent labour leaders, T. M. Molloy, was appointed Fair Wage Officer for the province in August, 1909 to see that the fair wage clauses in government contracts were adhered to. Molloy also acted as mediator in disputes involving employees on provincial works projects.[22]

The first significant indication that the provincial government recognized the suggestions of organized labour came with the introduction of "An Act for the Protection of Persons employed in Factories" during the 1909 session. As Premier Scott stated when he moved the second reading of the bill, it was the government's intention

> to have a short bill which would put in the hands of the Government powers of enforcing some regulations and appointing inspectors, who would have power to see the machinery was properly protected. However, after drafting the bill, it was found necessary to embody some of the regulations found necessary in other provinces....The laws of other provinces had been carefully examined, and such of them as best met their particular circumstances had been adopted, and he thought they would be found ample for the factory conditions in this province for a considerable time to come.[23]

Very little debate resulted from the Factories Bill except for an amendment by the Conservatives proposing an eight rather than a ten hour day for women. In the final form the Factories Act had as its basic aim the protection of employees from the hazards of industry. But perhaps more important, was the fact that the Act prohibited the employment of children under the age of fourteen years as well as

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22. See supra pp.25-8 for a discussion of Molloy's role in the various disputes during the construction of the Legislative Buildings.

23. The Morning Leader, Nov. 27, 1909.

regulating the working hours for women.

The Factories Act marked the first significant attempt by organized labour to influence the nature of a piece of legislation. Several letters were written by the Regina Trades and Labour Council offering suggestion and the Attorney-General, W. F. A. Turgeon, even went so far as to consult the Council before the final draft was presented.[24]

After the passage of the Factories Act organized labour was concerned that it be adhered to, although its actual administration was the government's problem. The Act was a major departure in the area of labour legislation in that a substantial staff was necessary to enforce it. Trained inspectors had to be hired along with other administrative staff, and the increase in the number of factories (any manufacturing establishment employing six or more operatives) made the administrative problem more acute. It was finally found necessary to establish a special branch of the Department of Agriculture to deal solely with labour problems. As a result, a bill was passed on March 23, 1911 creating a Bureau of Labour.

The object of the Bureau, as it was originally constituted under the Department of Agriculture with Thomas Molloy as its secretary, was

> to collect, assort, systematise and publish information and statistics relating to:
> (a) Employment, wages and hours of labour throughout the province;
> (b) Strikes and other labour difficulties;
> (c) Co-operation, trades unions, labour organizations;
> (d) The relations between capital and labour and other subjects of interest to workingmen;

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24. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Dec. 3, 1909 meeting.

(e) The commercial, industrial and sanitary conditions surrounding workingmen; and
(f) Such other matters as relate to the permanent prosperity of the industries of the province.[25]

Besides the functions connected with information and statistics the "good offices of the bureau are always available to employer and employee alike as a mediator in strikes, lockouts or other labour difficulties." Also, the Bureau was responsible for the acquisition and distribution of harvest hands as well as for the administration of the Factories Act and for the enforcement of fair wage schedules.[26]

In its first year of operation the Bureau of Labour compiled a mass of statistics dealing with various aspects of Saskatchewan industrial life. These statistics which appeared in the Bureau's first report were part of the first real attempt to assess the state of industry in the province. As such it contained a detailed list of the province's unions, along with statistics on the size of and amount spent on the various industries established as well as wages and salaries paid in various areas and industries. Additions were made in subsequent reports. In 1920 the Bureau became a separate department in accordance with a request from organized labour.[27]

While still under the Department of Agriculture the Bureau acquired responsibility for the administration of several pieces of legislation. The first and foremost of these was the Factories Act. One large area

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25. Saskatchewan Statutes, 1910-11, Cap. 8, "An Act Respecting the Bureau of Labour."

26. Bureau of Labour Report, 1911, pp. 5-7.

which the Factories Act did not cover was that of the fledgling mining industry in the province. In this field there was a glaring need for inspection and supervision because of the dangers inherent in the industry. This need was recognized during the Territorial period before the turn of the century and it resulted in the Coal Mines Act of 1898 which provided "for the proper ventilation, inspection, sanitation and general operation of mines with a view to the health, safety and comfort of the employees."[28] Under its terms all mines in operation in the province had to be reported to the Minister of Agriculture and these had to be inspected at least twice a year by "a thoroughly competent mining engineer." Further to ensure the safety of those who worked in the mines all pit bosses and fire bosses had to pass a government examination before accepting employment in the mines. However, a lack of knowledge concerning mining conditions, together with lax administration, was in part responsible for the almost continuous labour unrest in the coal mines in the south-eastern corner of the province.

An act which did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Labour but one which organized labour deemed to be extremely important was the Workmen's Compensation Act (1910-11). This piece of legislation pertained to all areas of work except agriculture and gave workers the right to seek compensation for injury from the employer, whether the accident was caused by carelessness or not. In the case of a death the immediate next-of-kin could seek compensation. Because of the very

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28. Ibid., 1911, p. 67.

nature of the Workmen's Compensation Act it had to be removed from political and other influences. Therefore, all cases under the act were brought before a judge without jury. However, the onus of prosecution lay with the employee, in contrast to the terms of a later Workmen's Compensation Act passed in 1929, which established a fund for the payment of claims and established a board to hear all cases arising out of industrial accidents.

The 1910-11 Workmen's Compensation Act was the last major piece of labour legislation adopted by the Saskatchewan legislature until 1919, when a minimum wage was established for women. The reason for this seems to be that organized labour made few significant demands in the intervening period. The yearly delegation from the Saskatchewan executive of the Trades and Labor Congress did continue to make its desires known but most of these did not directly involve labour legislation. Such measures as the abolition of election deposits, the implementation of direct legislation and the restriction of Oriental labour were asked for and the government either accepted or rejected them, depending on the amount of backing the proposed measures received outside of organized labour. Other requests were made for the amendment of existing legislation and most of these were eventually granted.

A minimum wage act for women was first requested by the delegation from the T.L.C. when it visited the government in November, 1917. At that time the request was for a minimum wage of at least $12.00 a week for trained women and at least $8.00 for apprentices.[29] Essentially the

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29. Ibid., 1918, p. 25.

same request was made the following year (December, 1918) and on this occasion the government agreed in principle and promised to draft legislation later.[30] The result was "The Minimum Wage Act, 1919". As its full title stated, the Act fixed "standard Minimum Wages, Hours of Employment and Conditions of Labour for Females" in the province. The Act also provided for a minimum wage board of five persons (two being female) which would determine the minimum wage for a certain area as well as reasonable hours and sanitary conditions. The Board had the power to summon witnesses and examine them under oath. The Act also compelled employers to keep a record of their employees' wages. If less than the established minimum wage was paid the employee could recover the difference in a civil action, even though an agreement had been made that work would be done for less than the established minimum. The only restriction on the operation of the Act was that it applied only to cities and its scope could be extended only by an order-in-council.

The surprisingly good relations between organized labour and the Liberal government during the first decade and a half can be attributed to a number of factors. The first premier, Walter Scott, had some early connections with trade unions as a member of the Typographical Union in Winnipeg. This connection could have conceivably engendered some sympathy in him for unions and their problems. A more probable reason, however, can be found in the fact that both Scott and his successor, W. M. Martin, were extremely astute politicians. Both

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30. Ibid., 1919, pp. 24-5.

realized that what labour desired was not on the whole unreasonable and had in most cases been granted previously in other provinces. They also recognized that organized labour, though small in number, had a tendency to be quite vocal and if their minimal requests were not granted embarrassing repercussions might result. Therefore, in the final analysis one must say that in the early years of both organized labour and the provincial government there was a mutual understanding and respect which was demonstrated in the relative ease with which labour legislation was written into the statute books. But to state that this mutual understanding and respect was due solely to a strong, united organized work force would be the result of undue flattery to the movement. It must be granted that sincere attempts were made to inject a measure of cohesiveness not only to the movement in the province but also in the nation and the continent. Yet, except for a handful of enthusiastic supporters of unionism the majority of rank-and-file members became apathetic when the initial zeal of a labour day celebration or a building fund campaign had worn off. The result was that the average unionist had to be continually prodded.

CHAPTER 4

THE WAR 1914-18

The trade union movement in Saskatchewan had had almost a decade to develop and entrench itself within the fibre of urban society before it had to face its first major test. The period of the First World War, with its economic and political dislocation and emotional uncertainty, was a challenge to the patience of not only the trade union movement as a whole but also of the average workingman. Never before had the "ties that bind" been so seriously stretched, and in many cases broken. Yet those ties, which showed enough flexibility to resist the factors causing disunity, were permanently strengthened by the experience. On the other hand, the scars left by the wartime crisis permanently defaced the movement.

It would be an understatement to say that the ranks of organized labour in Saskatchewan faced the coming of the war in 1914 with mixed emotions. For those with a strong socialist bent the conflict meant a step towards the collapse of capitalist society and the beginning of a new social order. Those steeped in religious fundamentalism viewed the war as punishment for past iniquities. Militant socialists and avid fundamentalists, however, were in a minority. For most, the war was something vague and far away, brought closer only by the occasional report in the Leader and the Phoenix of atrocities in Belgium. Despite the distance, however, almost all unionists had at least a passing interest in the war, but only those who had recently emigrated from one of the combatant countries showed anything approaching chauvinism.

Although the issues surrounding the war were by no means clear, democracy still had to be preserved and, as a result, some of the boys did enlist. For those, special "smokers" were arranged and there was much back-slapping and assurance that those who were departing would be back at their jobs within a few months relating stories of their individual gallantry. Most locals passed resolutions in favour of preserving for those who enlisted both their union membership and their jobs and seniority, provided, of course, that dues had been paid up to the date of departure. Most locals managed to send Christmas parcels to their members overseas, sometimes through the women's auxiliary, throughout the war. Some "did their bit" by barring membership to people of German origin.[1] Others, such as Saskatoon Typographical Union 663, contemplated establishment of a fund to buy a machine gun for some militia unit.[2] This project did not materialize, however. In the later stages of the war, organized labour made some contributions to the Soldiers' Relief Fund; and shortly after the Armistice there was an exchange of delegates between the Regina Trades and Labor Council and the Great War Veterans' Association.[3] But concentrated overt enthusiasm for the war was lacking.

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1. Regina District Council of Carpenters and Joiners Minute Book, March 12, 1914-April 16, 1923; April 17, 1918 meeting.

2. Saskatoon Typographical Union No. 663 Minutes, Aug. 7, 1915 meeting, Sask. Archives (SA).

3. Regina Trades and Labor Council (hereafter R.T. & L.C.) Minutes, Dec. 23, 1918 meeting. (SA).

For organized labour in Saskatchewan and in Western Canada generally, the war was a period of growing unrest and militancy, which paralleled a similar development among the farm population. The trades and labor councils began to find themselves faced with practical issues, of immediate importance, yet transcending day-to-day activities. These helped to unify the member unions. They were issues which smelled of adventure, of departures into fields of action which seemed to promise a new and better life for the worker. But this promise was destined to slip quickly through their fingers as a result of rash action which plummeted the protagonists back into conservatism for another decade.

An event which greatly detracted from interest in the war was the situation which presented itself during the cold, bitter winter of 1914-15. The summer of 1914 had been marked by a slack period in industry and building and as a result only two strikes had occurred in the whole of that year. In the middle of February some of the barbers in Saskatoon went on strike against a proposed decrease in wages. But only four firms and eight employees were affected. An equally minor dispute occurred in Battleford when eight bricklayers of one firm walked out on October 14, complaining that they were not receiving the current rate of wages. When their demands were met they returned to work on October 21.[4] What is more important is that because of the slack period the workers saved very little for the inevitable winter, which was abnormally severe. Unemployment and general hardship resulted.

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4. Saskatchewan Bureau of Labour Report, 1914, p. 29.

In November 1914 an estimated 1,200 men were unemployed in the trades affiliated with the Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council alone and an estimated 200 in Prince Albert. Both the provincial and municipal governments scrambled to find a temporary solution to the situation. The Moose Jaw city council established a labour bureau in November for the purpose of registering those who still had an iota of optimism about getting work that winter.[5] The provincial government established similar bureaux in later months and also wood yards. The purpose of the latter was not so much to furnish wood as to provide some measure of relief. These measures, however, were merely temporary expedients and the results were, at best, limited. However, there were two avenues of escape, a return to the land or a stint in the expeditionary force. Both were turned to as a refuge from frustration.

Others expressed their frustration in other ways. At a mass meeting of the unemployed in Moose Jaw on April 18, 1915, a petition was signed by "two hundred and seventy British subjects" to be sent to Prime Minister Borden begging him to provide the hundreds of unemployed with passage to Britain, where jobs were rumoured to be plentiful.[6] Even though the Regina council agreed with this action, the Minister of Labour replied that nothing could be done in regard to the situation in Saskatchewan at that time. The Moose Jaw council

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5. The Labour Gazette, Dec. 1914, pp. 669-70.

6. R.T. & L.C. files. Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council resolution, a copy of which was sent to the R.T. & L.C. No date.

made another appeal, this time directly to Prime Minister Asquith, begging him for aid to emigration.[7] There is no record of a reply. The incident at Moose Jaw in itself is minor but it is an example of the growing discontent that manifested itself in the first year of the war. Another omen was the fact that fifteen Saskatchewan unions were dissolved during 1914, the highest mortality rate being in the building trades.[8] A union simply could not provide for the needs of its membership adequately. When demands were made at the negotiating table management immediately accused the union of being unpatriotic by placing the selfish desires of its membership before the welfare of the country. Yet the cost of living, inflated by wartime prosperity in the industrial areas of the East, rose equally fast in the un-industrialized West.

In the rising cost of living the trades and labor councils in the main centres in Saskatchewan saw an issue they could sink their teeth into. Throughout the war the councils became the forum for the

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7. R.T. & L.C. files. Telegram Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council to Asquith, May 2, 1915.

8. United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners locals: 1853 (North Battleford), #1606 (Prince Albert), 1867 (Regina), 1507 (Yorkton); Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America locals: #784 (Moose Jaw), #760 (Prince Albert); Operative Plasterers' and Cement Finishers' International Association locals: #135 (Moose Jaw), #442 (Saskatoon); Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers' International Alliance locals: #414 (Moose Jaw), #204 (Prince Albert), #308 (Saskatoon); United Garment Workers of America locals: #437 (Saskatoon); International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers local: #437 (Saskatoon); Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees Local: #614 (Moose Jaw); Journeymen Barbers' International Union of America local: #714 (Weyburn). Department of Labour Report on Labour Organization in Canada (hereafter Report on Labour Organization), 1915, Table pp 223-6.

discussion of various co-operative schemes.[9] A co-operative committee was established within the Regina council to arrange speaking dates for representatives from various co-operative societies being established in western Canada.[10] As well, a committee was appointed in September, 1916 to price coal in carload lots so that members of affiliated unions could buy this essential commodity at a reasonable price.[11] On the same line the Prince Albert Trades and Labor Council took steps to establish a co-operative store.[12]

Besides the rising cost of living, another irritant that appeared sometime after the beginning of the war was the matter of 2½ per cent beer. Although the issue was minor, it was still an irritant. In an attempt to sacrifice something "for the boys over there" Saskatchewan residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of prohibition in a plebiscite held during the summer of 1916 and all stores which dealt in intoxicating beverages were closed at 5:00 p.m. on December 31, 1916, "never to open again."[13] Any beverage with over 2½ per cent proof spirits was considered to be intoxicating and therefore could not be sold. (Proof spirits is an arbitrary standard used in the manufacture of alcoholic beverages. Two and one half per cent proof spirits would be approximately one half the strength of a beverage which was 2½ per cent

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9. R.T. & L.C. files. George Keen (editor of the Canadian Co-operator) to R.T. & L.C., Aug. 13, 1915.
10. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Nov. 13, 1916 meeting. (SA)
11. Ibid., Sept. 11, Sept. 25 and Oct. 23, 1916 meetings.
12. The Voice (Winnipeg), April 23, 1915, p.3.
13. The Morning Leader (Regina), Jan. 1, 1917, p. 11.

alcohol by weight.) Although there probably was some sympathy from the membership of the Regina council for the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and while the council had had some contact in its early years with the temperate Moral and Social Reform League in Regina, most of the workers of the city and province relished the tang of something stronger to drink after a hard day's work. However, the movement for 2½ per cent beer had its origin at the T.L.C. convention at Quebec in September, 1918 when John Young of the International Association of Machinists of Toronto, No. 235, introduced a resolution, probably instigated by the International Union of United Brewery and Soft Drink Workers of America, petitioning the dominion and provincial governments to allow the sale of beer with 2½ per cent alcohol by weight rather than proof spirits.[14] The resolution was adopted and a campaign was initiated to bring the matter to a successful conclusion.

While the T.L.C. was using its collective weight to influence the various levels of government for a stronger beer, the councils in Saskatchewan were mustering their machinery behind matters of local but greater importance. Inasmuch as organized labour was still concentrated at that time in the building trades, it found itself in a precarious position because of the diversion of capital from new construction to the war effort. Pressure was concentrated on the correction of local ills. Civic governments and the provincial government were petitioned frequently to establish works projects for the unemployed and to provide direct and indirest aid (for example, low rental housing) for those who were continually out of work because of slackness in their

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14. James J. Ralph (Ont. T.L.C. Executive) to R.T. & L.C., Oct. 26, 1918. On Brewery and Soft Drink Workers' #304 stationary.

trade.[15] The federal government was also petitioned to provide funds to civic and provincial governments for public works and relief.[16] As well, resolutions were presented advocating governmental control of rental charges so as to protect tenants against "the unscrupulous methods employed by the house owners...who by taking advantage of the demand for residences....have increased the rents from 25% to 100%."[17] Even when housing was provided by various agencies, periodic checks were made by a committee of the council to see that the facilities met certain standards. When these standards had not been met health authorities were immediately notified.[18]

Even though pressure was applied to the various governments there seemed to be a growing awareness after 1914 that government officials were unsympathetic, or at best indifferent to the needs of organized labour. This fostered a greater interest in placing labour's own representatives in the councils of the governing. Possibly the first success came late in 1913 when the Prince Albert Trades and Labor Council ran Robert Heggie (Boilermakers), and managed to get him elected

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15. R.T. & L.C. files. R.T. & L.C. to Premier Martin, March 30, 1918.

16. R.T. & L.C. files. Saskatoon Trades and Labour Council to R.L. Borden, Jan. 13, 1915.

17. R.T. & L.C. files. Resolution from the Postal Clerks' Association, Regina Branch.

18. As an example, after a committee of the Regina Council visited the Hotel de Welfare set up by the Salvation Army for the homeless, a demand was made in February, 1915 for the provincial health authorities to do something immediately about the congested quarters, poor ventilation and the general filthy conditions of the Hotel. R.T. & L.C. files. Committee Report, Feb. 9, 1915.

as alderman. However, in most cases initial attempts were disappointing and only perseverance brought some degree of success. In the civic election held in Regina in December, 1914, the Trades and Labor Council ran four candidates, W.E. Cocks (Painters and Decorators), J.S. Brundige (Typographical), George Peake (Carpenters) and W.B. Bird (Carpenters), but all finished well out of the running. Relying on their 1914 experience the Regina council ran only one candidate in 1915, Harry Perry (Bookbinders), and he placed fourth in a field of thirteen and got one of the six vacant seats, which he held for a number of years. In the 1915 civic elections in Prince Albert, a man by the name of Muir won labour's second seat on the city council, John Daisley, Secretary of the Trades Council, was re-elected a hospital governor and the President of the council, F.B. Judson, was elected to the school board.[19] In Saskatoon the labour candidate for mayor, H.B. Bailey, was defeated by only thirty-three votes. In 1916 organized labour in Regina placed another member on the city council in the person of James Habkirk, while in Moose Jaw, the Trades and Labor Council managed to get C.H. Chadwick (a member of the provincial executive of the T.L.C.) elected as alderman.

These successes of labour candidates on the civic level showed not only a growing willingness by organized labour to get out and work for its candidates, but also an increasing acceptance by the urban population as a whole of the program and actions of those who toiled for a living as opposed to those who ran as "gentlemen." With the

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19. The Voice, Feb. 11, 1916, p. 8.

realization that they could become a political force to be contended with, organized labour in Regina and Moose Jaw entered provincial politics with some enthusiasm in 1917. There was, however, one problem. While civic politics was non-partisan, provincial politics was not. From the early days of organized labour in Saskatchewan there had been a nominal acceptance of the provincial Liberal party under Walter Scott but during the war there seemed to be a growing impatience with the government's lethargy in considering the problems of organized labour. The result was a split in sympathies between those who still clung to Liberalism and those who advocated independent action. An illustration of this was a strong vote of censure by a number of unions in Saskatoon against a Mr. McGrath for allowing himself to be elected to the executive of the Liberal Club there while holding the presidency of the local Trades and Labor Council.[20] Subsequently the Regina Trades and Labor Council passed a motion stating that "no official of the council can take part in any party politics as representing or as an official of this Council unless said politics be that of the Labor Party."[21]

Under the Labor banner the organized workers in Saskatoon sponsored Alex Eddy, a machinist from the Sutherland shops, to run in the provincial general election held on June 26, 1917, but the results were disappointing. Eddy polled only 476 votes as compared to 2,592 for Donald Maclean (Conservative) and 1,895 for Philip Mackenzie (Liberal).

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20. Saskatoon Sypographical Union, No. 663 minutes, Feb. 3, 1917 meeting.

21. R.T. & L.C. minutes, June 11, 1917 meeting.

He again lost his deposit in the 1921 election.[22] From that time on Eddy concentrated on civic politics and held a seat on city council for a number of years.

The attempts by organized labour in Moose Jaw to place a representative in the Provincial Assembly met with more success. In the 1917 election William George Baker placed third in a three-way fight with 998 votes as against 1,621 for W.B. Willoughby (Conservative) and 1,328 for W.G. Ross (Liberal). Baker also lost the by-election held in June, 1918 to the Liberal W.E. Knowles, but this time the margin was much smaller. However, in the 1921 general election he topped a field of five in a two-member constituency. He again topped the polls in the 1925 general election but this time he had modified his position to that of Labor-Liberal.[23] If reasons are sought for the success of the efforts in Moose Jaw as contrasted with their failure elsewhere in the province, two possibilities exist. First and foremost, Moose Jaw was the most highly organized centre in Saskatchewan with the longest tradition of union activity. Secondly, Baker represented the conservative wing of organized labour in that city, thus enjoying more confidence than a radical candidate would have among those who still doubted labour's motives.

Although Moose Jaw laid claim to being the most organized centre in Saskatchewan in the first two decades of this century, this was no

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22. Directory of Saskatchewan Ministries, Members of the Legislative Assembly and Elections, 1905-53, Regina, 1954, p. 110.

23. Ibid., p. 96.

great distinction; the province as a whole was not highly organized. It could only boast 129 locals reported to the Dominion Department of Labour in 1914 (compared with 143 in Manitoba and 163 in Alberta) and this number only increased by six by 1918. Organization was hampered by the fact that organized labour was spread among at least five major centres. As a result, there was a constant reliance on Winnipeg, the mother centre, for ideas as well as inspiration. Winnipeg labour dabbled in federal politics to the extent of sponsoring the occasional candidate while Saskatchewan unionists, separated by miles of farmland, were content, in most cases, to watch proceedings in that city to the east. A feeble departure from this practice was made in 1917, but the results were disappointing.

At the 1906 T.L.C. Convention, a resolution was passed stating that the Congress must merely remain "the legislative mouthpiece of organized labour in Canada, irrespective and independent of any body engaged in the effort to send representatives of the people to Parliament and the legislatures." However, the provincial executives of the Congress were allowed to call conventions to form Labor parties if they so desired. At the 1917 Convention it was decided that the 1906 stand "has not resulted in the building up of a harmonious and virile political organization" and thus "the time has arrived when the workers of Canada should follow British precedent and organize a labour party upon such a basis that trade unionists, socialists, fabiens /sic/, co-operators and farmers can unite to promote legislation in the best interests of the wealth producers of the nation."

> We, therefore, strongly recommend the organization of an Independent Labour Party for Canada upon the same lines as the British Labour Party has been organized and giving recognition to organizations having similar objects as those affiliated with the British Labour Party. With a view to giving effect to this recommendation we would strongly urge that all working-class political organizations in each province call a conference of the respective organizations entitled to partnership in such a labour party and proceed to co-operate for political action.

For the election Walter Rollo of Hamilton was chosen as official leader and thirty-six candidates were nominated throughout Canada to contest the December, 1917 General Election. In Moose Jaw, James Somerville ran against the Liberal Unionist, James A. Calder, and he polled 2,946 votes to 8,866 for Calder. In Saskatoon, the candidate selected was James William Casey, who ran against another Government supporter and went down to defeat by a vote of 9,639 to 1,833. Casey and Somerville were officially recognized candidates of the Independent Labour Party but in Regina, Andrew MacBeth, who ran on a Liberal-Labor ticket, was not so recognized. However, he still managed to poll 2,599 votes to 10,563 for the Government candidate, W.D. Cowan.[24]

Although the miserable performance by organized labour was due partly to the inability of the population as a whole to see itself represented by someone from the working class, the defeats were also due to apathy within the ranks of labour. The minutes of the labour organizations consulted record little or no discussion of the issues such as had been evident in the civic and provincial elections. This,

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24. The information concerning the Independent Labour Party is taken from Report on Labour Organization, 1917, pp. 40-3.

however, did not prevent unionists from watching matters in Ottawa and voicing approval or disapproval, as the situation warranted. During the war years disapproval seemed to be the rule rather than the exception.

Even during the first days of the war organized labour saw the management of the war effort as one big mess of inefficiency, ineptitude and profiteering. The flamboyant Sam Hughes, the Ross rifle and the bungling in recruitment all contributed to this. The reports by returned soldiers of implements of war discarded as useless only strengthened the convictions of Western unionists who tended to see anything that emanated from east of the Great Lakes as being sinister, or at best sub-standard. Added to this was the occasional report from Winnipeg of conditions in the war plants where, for example, workers were receiving from five to twenty cents less than was being paid in plants not producing war materials, and where in all cases a fair wage clause had been omitted from war contracts.[25] Aside from muffled grumbling, however, little active protest was evident during the early years of the war, as most unionists followed the T.L.C. declaration at the 1915 convention "that it was the duty of the Labour world to lend every assistance possible to Great Britain and her Allies" for the preservation of democracy.[26] But even then there was a growing body of opinion that the preservation of democracy could be best ensured by a more democratic government comprising members of all parties.

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25. R.T. & L.C. files. R.A. Rigg (Secretary of the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council) to all trades and labor councils, Dec. 24, 1915.

26. The Canadian Annual Review (hereafter C.A.R.), 1915, p. 430.

Besides, such a government would be more in accord with the principle of non-partisanship, which was an inherent part of western political thinking.

Besides the need to preserve democracy, possibly the main reason that labour did not show any open signs of disenchantment with the Conservative administration of Sir Robert Borden was that their interests had not been directly affected, and therefore indifference prevailed. This state of affairs was destined to change when the Government created the National Service Board on October 5, 1916.

When the Board was created by Order-in-Council, its "primary object was to facilitate recruiting by a sort of voluntary co-ordinating of labour in the various industries with army requirements and to obtain a National registration of man-power."[27] Organized labour, however, failed to sympathize adequately with the Federal Government over a recruitment policy which had ultimately necessitated National Registration. From the first suggestion of registration union opposition was fairly widespread. The primary fear was that conscription of manpower would follow registration and, as conscripted forces would come primarily from the ranks of workingmen, the fear was, to some extent, justified. This fear was exemplified as early as March, 1916 in this response to a resolution favouring conscription passed by the Toronto Recruiting Committee, a voluntary organization established to help in the recruitment of soldiers.

> That as the Dominion Government has said that voluntary enlistments are perfectly satisfactory, and that Conscription in any form is not necessary in Canada, we are of the opinion that organizations such as the Recruiting League should not, in any way, embarrass the Government by forwarding resolutions on national questions such as this. 28

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27. Ibid., 1917, p. 325.
28. Ibid., 1916, pp. 429-30.

In May the New Westminster Trades and Labor Council went on record as vehemently opposing any measure that approached conscription, even to the extent of threatening a general strike to put teeth into the argument.[29]

When the Board was established with Sir Thomas Tait (and later R.B. Bennett) as its Director-General, opposition had a tangible object instead of a mere principle. The Trades and Labour Council in Victoria condemned registration at a meeting on December 6, because the membership felt that it was merely a means of cushioning the introduction of conscription. The Council in London, Ontario passed a resolution favouring the registration of wealth before the registration of manpower.[30] Only when the registration cards reached Saskatchewan on January 2, 1917, giving every man between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five the honour of signing, did the ranks of organized labour take any real cognizance of the gravity of the situation in the province. It was at this time that a significant falling out of western Canadian labour with the T.L.C. occurred, and a return of Saskatchewan unionists to the ideas adopted by the mother centre, Winnipeg, became evident.

At a meeting of the T.L.C. executive council with R.B. Bennett and Borden late in December, 1916 assurance had been given by the Government that no coercion or penalty would be applied provided that "correct and conscientious replies" were given on the cards.[31] Also, National Service was defined as covering "natural resources, wealth and the means of wealth production" as well as manpower. Further correspondence between the executive and the government resulted in

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29. Ibid., p. 430.

30. R.T. & L.C. files. London Trades and Labor Council resolution, Jan. 18, 1917.

31. The Morning Leader, Jan. 3, 1917, p. 1.

assurances that "the proposals for National Service are not connected with Conscription. Rather, the idea was to make an appeal for voluntary National Service which would render unnecessary any resort to compulsion." With such assurances the executive council of the T.L.C. recommended that the membership of all affiliated bodies comply with the requests of the Board.[32]

The immediate reaction of organized labour in the major centres in Western Canada was that there was treachery afoot. At a meeting of the Calgary Trades and Labor Council on January 5, 1917, a statement was issued that with registration an attempt was being made by "the vested interests of Canada to obscure the real issue, for reasons which are obvious." To face this threat Calgary unionists called for a special convention of the T.L.C. to discuss the difference of opinion between unionists throughout the Dominion. As a potential unifying factor the Calgary council pledged itself to support a scheme that would mobilize and use the nation's natural resources and utilities.[33]

For the majority of Winnipeg unionists the time to propose an alternative scheme was past. The deed had been done. Besides, the existing registration scheme included natural resources and utilities. The main problem at hand was manpower, conscription of which would inevitably in time deplete and redistribute the ranks of organized labour. The solution was to refuse to sign the cards. A resolution

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32. R.T. & L.C. files. A report of the meeting, the correspondence from the Government, and the executive council's recommendations appear in a memorandum from the T.L.C. president to all affiliated bodies. Dec. 28, 1916.

33. R.T. & L.C. files. J.E. Young (secretary of the Calgary Trades and Labor Council) to the R.T. & L.C., Jan. 6, 1917.

to this effect was passed at a mass meeting of Winnipeg workingmen on the night of January 2. R.A. Rigg, Labour M.L.A., was the spotlight speaker at the meeting and he contended that in the light of recent speeches made by Borden and Robert Rogers, the Minister of Public Works, he could only conclude that the T.L.C. executive had been hoodwinked by the Government. Thus, the action of the executive had to be repudiated.[34]

The Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council pursued a more cautious approach to the problem of registration. After carefully considering the reactions and proposals of the various councils throughout the Dominion, it agreed at a meeting on January 10 that a special convention of the T.L.C. be held as soon as possible to establish a <u>united</u> voice among organized labour concerning registration. Registration itself was a <u>fait accompli</u>. The problem at hand was to establish a policy on the administration of the National Service Board, to decide:

(a) To what extent the removal of men from one part of the country to another may make military service compulsory on the part of other men.
(b) And, further, what guarantees should be given as to (1) the care of the dependents of men removed; (2) the protection of the property and property rights of men removing; (3) as to the future reinstatement of men removing into their former positions of equal value to those held previous to their removal; and
(c) Such other questions as are deemed necessary to make clear the issues at stake as touching workers in relation to the question of National Service in all its bearings.[35]

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34. <u>The Morning Leader</u>, Jan. 4, 1917, pp. 1-2.

35. R.T. & L.C. files. W. Snelgrove (secretary of the Saskatoon Trades and Labor Council) to the R.T. & L.C., Jan. 15, 1917.

Moose Jaw unionists immediately followed the Winnipeg lead in opposing registration unreservedly. Richard Chadwick, secretary of the Moose Jaw Trades Council, stated while in Regina for a T.L.C. (Saskatchewan Executive) meeting that Moose Jaw unionists opposed the scheme because it was merely "the thin edge of the wedge for furthering the idea of conscription."[36] The reaction of unionists in Regina suggests two interesting possibilities. Either labour did not want to show its cards until the appropriate moment, or perhaps there was a breakdown in communications between those in executive positions and the rank-and-file. On Christmas Day, 1916, the President of the Trades Council, George Sturdy, stated to the press that he had no objection to the National Service Board, even though R. B. Bennett had refused to answer four questions put to him by western unionists in Winnipeg concerning the administration of the Board.[37]

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36. The Morning Leader, Jan. 2, 1917, p. 4.

37. The four questions left unanswered by Bennett were:
    1. How do you propose to mobilize and direct human energy without further enriching those wealthy corporations in Canada, who are now exploiting the nation in its hour of need?
    2. What has the Federal government done to prevent the people from being exploited by those corporate interests, other than by enforcing a war tax and has not the war tax been added to the price of our necessities by these corporations and eventually paid for by the producer and the consumer?
    3. Should not the principle underlying national service be equality of service, equality of sacrifice, and both rendered directly to the state?
    4. If by answering questions 23 and 24 of your national service card in the affirmative, will you guarantee that our services be utilized directly for the benefit of the state?

    The Morning Leader, Dec. 26, 1916, p. 8
    Note: The questions referred to stated: 23. Would you be willing to change your present work for other necessary work at the same pay during the war? 24. Are you willing if your railway fare is paid, to leave where you now live, and go to some other place in Canada to do such work?

He thought that "only the Socialist faction of trades unionists would offer any opposition to the scheme if any was offered."[38] The same newspaper story also stated that other prominent labour officials concurred with the views expressed by Mr. Sturdy.

The question was again posed by the press, this time to Harry Perry, the Regina member of the T.L.C. executive, when that body held its annual meeting in the Queen City on January 2 and 3, and again the answer was that there would be no opposition to the Board.[39] However, it was reported that a public meeting would be held to discuss the matter of registration.[40] Whether the results of the meeting were a surprise to those in responsible union positions it is difficult to say, but surprise and shock must have been registered by those members of the public who had followed the issue in the local press.[41]

The meeting, which opened at 8:30 on the night of Tuesday, January 3, in Trades Hall, was later reported as the largest labour gathering in Regina up to that time. Notified primarily by word of mouth, the crowd that gathered in the large room seemed to be quite excited even before the meeting opened. As the charters on the wall that marked the existence of the various trades kept a silent watch, A.L. Waddell (Bookbinders) seated himself to record the proceedings and Jimmy Regan,

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38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., Jan. 2, 1917, p. 4.

40. Ibid., p. 11.

41. See the Regina Post, Jan. 4, 1917 and the editorial in The Morning Leader, Jan. 4, 1917, p. 4.

vice-president of Trades Coundil, rapped his gavel for order. Heated discussion began, with parliamentary procedure falling by the wayside on several occasions. When the excitement had died down, when the last man had filed out, still talking, and the dust had settled, Waddell had recorded the longest resolution ever passed until then by labour in Regina.

To say that the resolution was strongly worded would be an understatement. In essence, the resolution declared that those present realized that the Canadian nation was at war to maintain the Empire, and that they also realized that it was the Canadian working people who were bearing the major burden of the war. However, they were "prepared to continue to make great efforts and bear great burdens in connection with the war, but they are not prepared to bear the double burden of the war and the profit-takers." Because this double burden was contrary to the spirit of democratic government and in view of the fact that a member of the working class had been refused entry into the Government, the resolution stated that those present would refuse to sign the registration cards, at least until the Prime Minister had redefined his stand in relation to "his own friends, the financial and industrial magnates and the numerous officials to whom his government is paying large salaries." As this was probably unlikely, the replacement of Borden and his government by a more representative body was thought to be necessary.[42]

Press reaction to the resolution was immediate and highly critical. The Conservative Regina Post implied on the first page of its January 4

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42. For a complete text of the January 3, 1917 resolution see Appendix A.

edition that the resolution was the result of coercion from a crackpot minority and was not really the view of the majority.[43] The Liberal Morning Leader, while more sympathetic with labour's stand on the patronage, inefficiency, and corruption alleged to be inherent in the Conservative administration, argued that refusal to sign the cards was the wrong way of changing the situation because only the war effort would suffer in the end.[44]

Despite this flood of adverse criticism, the Trades Council stood its ground. The Resolution Publicity Committee under the able chairmanship of Smith Eddy (Bricklayers and Masons) was mobilized to comply with the last paragraph of the resolution, which demanded that the resolution be given as much publicity as possible. Five hundred copies were printed and sent to all those Trades Councils affiliated with the T.L.C., as well as to all Council presidents and labour newspapers. Special letters were written to Borden, Bennett and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and sent along with copies of the resolution.[45] Copies were also sent

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43. The Regina Post, Jan. 4, 1917, p. 1.

44. Editorial, The Morning Leader, Jan. 4, 1917, p. 4.

45. Laurier's reply was non-committal. R.T. & L.C. files. Wilfrid Laurier to R.T. & L.C., Jan. 12, 1917. Bennett chastised the working people of Regina for daring to defy the law. Bennett to R.T. & L.C., Jan. 16, 1917.

to all members of the House of Commons with covering letters, as well as to anyone else who might be sympathetic and influential.[46]

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46. The letter sent to the members of the House of Commons read:

Regina, January 17, 1917.

Blanck Blanck /sic/, Esq., M.P.,
House of Commons, Ottawa.

Dear Sir,--

As a Member of Parliament and a Canadian, your help is earnestly requested to establish a more united and efficient nation. The working people feel that their interests have been completely sold out to the commercial and official profit seekers. They feel that the National Registration Scheme is merely a clever and subtle move toward putting the working power of the nation more completely under the control of that group of men who have been wringing profits out of the nation's suffering, and that if abuses within the Government's control were abolished there would be no lack of volunteers for either the army or munitions plants.

We would request your attention to the enclosed resolution and solicit your sympathy and support for the needed reforms.

We are, most respectfully yours,

The Working People of Regina

Seven answers were received, of which most were non-committal. The reply from the Conservative A.L. Davidson (Annapolis), however, rebuked the working people for disloyalty. He stated: "It strikes me that if your Regina friends have any such notions as these a residence in Germany or Turkey would be much more congenial to them than in this free and patriotic land of Canada." A.L. Davidson to R.T. & L.C., Jan. 30, 1917. R.T. & L.C. files. Smith Eddy retaliated with the statement, "...I have a sincere scientific curiosity to understand the peculiar mental attitude which would prompt such a letter as the one before me, and you would render a service to science by submitting further specimens." R.T. & L.C. files. Smith Eddy to Davidson, Feb. 2, 1917.

One of the influential individuals whose sympathy was sought was Saskatchewan's Premier Martin. In a well-worded memorandum, the Resolution Publicity Committee carefully outlined their views on the matter and hoped that the Provincial Legislature would not accept the Federal scheme,[47] even though registration had already been mentioned favourably in the Speech from the Throne on January 25. Copies of the widely distributed resolution were also sent. Although Martin invited Eddy to discuss the matter with him,[48] he had already stated during the Throne Speech debate that the registration cards should be signed.[49] Seeing the futility of further discussion, the Publicity Committee politely thanked the Premier and turned in other directions.[50]

The registration issue was next dragged to the doorstep of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, who were holding their annual convention in Moose Jaw from February 13th to the 16th.[51] There the Regina Council aroused more sympathy than had been received from the Government and the Legislature. J.A. Maharg, president of the Grain Growers, stated in his opening remarks on the 13th:

> ...every fair-minded man must admit that they had a certain amount of justice on their side.
>
> The manner in which they placed the responsibility for their refusal to sign at the door of the national service commission must surely receive the consideration of that body as it is scarcely British fair-play to expect the

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47. R.T. & L.C. files. Smith Eddy to Martin, Jan. 27, 1917.

48. R.T. & L.C. files. Martin to Eddy, Feb. 1, 1917.

49. The Morning Leader, Jan. 30, 1917, p. 9.

50. R.T. & L.C. files. Eddy to Martin, Feb. 2, 1917.

51. R.T. & L.C. files. Resolution Publicity Committee report, Feb. 12, 1917.

> laborers to place their services entirely at the disposal of the commission without the commission first having given them the assurance that any sacrifice they were making would not be taken advantage of by individuals or corporations for private gain. If a portion of our wealth is going to be conscripted, surely it must apply to all, as labor is the key to wealth. 52

Whatever sympathy the Grain Growers held for the position taken by the Regina Trades Council, the rank-and-file unionists had begun to lose their enthusiasm. By the beginning of March most of them had probably filled out their registration cards, partly because of a lack of sustained interest, partly because of opposition from some quarters, and partly through fear that legal authority was being challenged. But what were the effects of the two months' stand? Although the interest engendered by the efforts of the Publicity Committee was probably not commensurate with the time and money spent on the campaign, it added to the growing tide of discontent with the Borden administration for the same reasons that the Regina Council stated--inefficiency, patronage, corruption and broken promises. Also evident from the registration issue was the growing awareness by westerners, whether unionists or not, that their needs would not be satisfied by organizations controlled in the East, whether the Federal Government, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the C.P.R. or the T.L.C. On the local level a new group of unionists was rising to prominence in the face of this challenge

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52. The Morning Leader, Feb. 14, 1917, p. 11.

to the interests of labour: men well versed in the arts of rhetoric, organization, and publicity; men who were not content to toe the line drawn by the T.L.C. and deal only with local issues; men like Ralph Heseltine and Smith Eddy in Regina, Bill Mills in Saskatoon, and Jim Sommerville in Moose Jaw, whose real impact would be fully felt at a later date.

Another point of interest concerning organized labour and the registration issue was that until the National Service Board was established union membership had remained relatively quiet concerning the activities of the Borden administration. The creation of the Board, however, seemed to open a floodgate and unionists used the issue to voice their disenchantment with almost all of Borden's policies. The rising cost of living, the alleged profiteering, patronage and corruption, all came under attack at the beginning of 1917. This strengthened the body of opinion that thought that Borden should "at once place the resignation of his government in the hands of the governor-general and advise His Excellency to call as his new advisers a government in which all classes of the nation will be represented."[53]

The dissenters got their union government when Borden announced the formation of a coalition cabinet in October, 1917. Yet, even though a labour man was given a seat in the Union Government, the means that Borden had used to get his government re-elected in the December 17 general election was especially odious to organized labour.

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53. R.T. & L.C. Resolution, Jan. 3, 1917. See Appendix A.

The Wartime Elections Act, passed prior to the formation of the first union cabinet, struck at a principle which most unionists held dear. Although the predominantly Anglo-Saxon union leaders showed no great love for aliens, the fact that the Act disfranchised those of enemy alien birth or those who habitually spoke an enemy language even though they might have immigrated as early as 1897 was viewed as a denial of the right to vote. Alas, the Act was vigorously condemned at the T.L.C. Convention held at Ottawa in September because it threatened to lead to "the formation of a military caste" by favouring the wives of servicemen to the detriment of some naturalized Canadians.[54] When the political reasoning behind the Act became evident, criticism mounted.

The effects of the Act on the people of Western Canada were probably more pronounced than in any other area in the Dominion because of the large number who had homesteaded there who were of enemy alien origin, having immigrated from Germany and Austria-Hungary and having been naturalized after March 31, 1902. Many people in the Prairie Provinces believed that the Act, "one of the most pernicious measures ever foisted on this or any other country," was an attempt further to concentrate political power in Eastern Canada and consequently demands were voiced for a system of proportional representation, a reform long advocated by organized labour.[55] With proportional representation its advocates thought that the people of Canada would not have to be

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54. C.A.R., 1917, p. 422.

55. Western Labour Conference, March 16-18, Calgary, Report, The Winnipeg Tribune, April 5, 1919, p. 5.

satisfied with a coalition of Conservatives and conscriptionist Liberals, both of which were supported by and responsible to the eastern business interests. Not only would western Canada receive representation in proportion to its population but smaller parties such as the Dominion Labour Party would be able to elect more members and the questionable activities of the Borden administration would be checked immediately.

But even with the formation of the Union Government, Borden's problems did not seem to be over. When the answers to the questions on the registration cards were tabulated they showed that 252,034 men between the ages of 18 and 45 were available for military service.[56] This statistic was shown to be of little relevance when it came to shoring up the rapidly decreasing enlistment figures. The number of volunteers began to fall off during December, 1916 "and this continued and grew worse during each succeeding month of 1917."[57] But Borden could do little to stop the tide because he had repeatedly stated that only dire necessity could move him to introduce compulsory military service. However, while in Europe to attend the sittings of the Imperial War Conference (February to May, 1917) he had a first-hand look at the war and the state of the Canadian contingent. When various recruiting schemes plus the lowering of fitness standards were shown to be sadly inadequate, Borden was forced to say that his previous statements on conscription "were absolutely and literally true when they were made. No one could then estimate or even imagine the magnitude of the efforts

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56. C.A.R., 1917, p. 304.

57. Ibid., p. 305.

necessary to win the war and to preserve our national existence."[58] The moment of dire necessity had come. Therefore, on May 18, Borden stated that compulsory service was necessary and would be introduced.

While Borden made his announcement on a rising tide of supporting opinion, organized labour almost completely dug itself in to oppose the measure. Only the Journeymen Barbers' Federation of Ontario openly voiced unqualified support.[59] On the other hand, T.L.C. President James Simpson issued the following statement on the day of Borden's announcement.

> The Government has not commanded the respect and confidence of the labour organizations of Canada in its administration of the country's affairs during the crisis....He /Borden/ has not taken the organized labour movement of Canada into his confidence, nor has he conferred with Labour's chief representatives since he returned, and until such time as he does we are justified in assuming that Conscription is unnecessary. 60

Simpson's statement was uncompromising in tone as compared with the stand taken by the Congress on registration in December 1916. On this occasion, however, the opinion of the entire trade union movement in Canada was to be led not by the Congress but by western unionists. On May 25, the Calgary Trades and Labour Council demanded that the entire wealth of the country be conscripted before anything

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58. Ibid., p. 336.

59. Report on Labour Organization, 1917, p. 27.

60. C.A.R., 1917, pp. 418-9.

was done about manpower. Two days later an Anti-Conscription League was formed in Vancouver and on the 30th, the Vancouver Council demanded a referendum on a general strike if conscription were passed. Meanwhile, the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council passed a resolution opposing conscription and demanding a referendum. A general strike was also promised by the British Columbia Federation of Labour if compulsory service were passed.

In Saskatchewan the Congress statement was "greeted with applause" at a meeting of the Regina Council held on May 22. When the leaders were canvassed by the local press after the meeting, three variations were evident. Some held the same position as the majority of Canadian unionists, that conscription of manpower should follow rather than precede the conscription of wealth. Others felt that a popular mandate was necessary before compulsory service was initiated. Still others flatly opposed conscription, no matter what the circumstances.[61] However, the exact stand was to be determined at a mass meeting called for May 31.

Meanwhile, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees No. 295 echoed the cry of wealth before manpower at a meeting on May 29. Essentially the same thought was expressed by the delegates to the Western Canada Conference of Typographical Unions which met in Regina from May 24th to the 27th. However, the wording was definitely stronger.

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61. The Morning Leader, May 23, 1917, p. 7.

The resolution criticised the Government for being oblivious of the numerous requests for conscription of wealth and for the creation of "a situation of desperation in the homes of the wage-earners" by failing to deal with the scarcity of food in a satisfactory manner. Therefore, until the Government had the confidence of the people, conscription should not be enforced.[62] The stand taken by the Typos was somewhat strange in view of the fact that this essentially conservative union had supported acceptance of the National Service Board and the registration cards.[63]

Even more inconsistent, however, was the conclusion reached by Regina workmen at the mass meeting held in Trades Hall (Trades Hall was a large room in the Labor Temple) on May 31. All might have gone as planned and a resolution condemning conscription might have been passed but for an advertisement in the Leader on May 29, implying that the meeting would be attended by those who opposed conscription. As a result, one hundred and fifty returned soldiers and new recruits appeared at the Labor Temple, outnumbering those in civilian clothes. This unheralded visit surprised the workingmen assembled, and affected the whole tenor of the meeting as well as the resolution passed. Bruce Bird (Carpenters), chairman for the evening, had little problem keeping

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62. The Morning Leader, May 25, 1917, p. 9

63. Regina Typographical Union No. 657 minutes, Jan. 6, 1917 meeting. (SA)

order among the uneasy group, except for one incident when an elderly gentleman was jeered at when he stated that a number of those who had enlisted in the first contingent had done so to escape starvation. Under the restraint imposed by the soldiers' presence resolutions were passed in reference to the high cost of living and the problem of food speculation. But the primary resolution, which was passed unanimously, pledged allegiance to the king and the empire, and support for the Government in its efforts "to place men in the firing line in France to defend our homes and the lives of our women and children." However, the resolution expressed the hope that the "leaders of all parties and creeds" would be consulted before any future measures respecting recruitment were adopted.[64]

While those in khaki marched off toward Germantown to sing patriotic songs in front of the office of Die Courier (a German language weekly), some of the assembled civilians must have scratched their heads at the sudden turn of events. It is quite evident from the long news report in the Morning Leader that the presence of the soldiers had a moderating influence on the resolutions passed. Yet, there was deeper meaning in those resolutions that cannot be explained away by the presence of the soldiers. Whereas registration had threatened the workingmen of Regina with displacement and therefore was of immediate concern, the introduction of conscription would not affect most of those who were gainfully employed. As Ernest Kirk, a constable with

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64. For a report on the mass meeting see The Morning Leader, June 1, 1917, p. 9. The full text of the resolutions passed has been included in Appendix B for the purpose of comparison with the January 3, 1917 resolution.

the Canadian Military Police, aptly stated, "...if conscription was adopted here, it would not affect very many of those present, not in khaki, who were engaged in trades useful to the nation. The men conscription would affect would be men on the street corners and in the pool-rooms."[65]

Also somewhat surprising was the fact that the Regina Council maintained its stand and refused to involve itself in any further discussion of conscription. When the Winnipeg Anti-Conscription League called for a convention of all groups opposed to compulsory service to be held at Port Arthur on September 12, the Regina Council politely refused, giving financial instability as an excuse.[66]

Meanwhile, the fight against conscription continued unabated elsewhere in Canada. On June 2, F. J. Dixon, a Manitoba labour M.L.A., just managed to escape with his life when a group of returned soldiers attacked an anti-conscription meeting in the Grand Theatre in Winnipeg, at which he was speaking.[67] Similar clashes occurred in other centres throughout the summer, but the final enactment of conscription on August 18 put a damper on anti-conscription opinion. The strongly worded statements delivered at the T.L.C. and Canadian Federation of Labour conventions in September were the swan song of labour opposition to compulsory service.[68]

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65. Ibid.

66. R.T. & L.C. files. Winnipeg Anti-Conscription League to R.T. & L.C., July 31, 1917 and R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Aug. 13, 1917 meeting.

67. The Morning Leader, June 4, 1917, p. 1.

68. C.A.R., 1917, p. 423.

Although compulsory service was acquiesced in following the September conventions, the administration of the Military Service Act was kept under constant scrutiny. One aspect of the Act which caused some consternation was the fact that, while certain specified sects were exempted from service, no provision had been made for conscientious objectors and these individuals were being jailed like mere cowards for refusing to serve. The Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council led the campaign in Western Canada to have the Act amended but if the Regina reaction to the attempt to gain popular support was any criterion, the results must have been discouraging.[69] With the end of the war the campaign was revitalized as there no longer seemed to be any reason at all for political prisoners to remain interned. This time, however, the Regina Council took a firmer stand on the issue by threatening a general strike if their demands were not heeded.[70]

Yet another factor which tended to create disaffection among the organized workers for the Union Government was the Order-in-Council of April 16, 1918 "declaring it an offence to print, publish, or publicly express seditious and anti-war opinions." The centre hardest hit by this Order was Vancouver, which was the hotbed of socialist thinking in the Dominion. As a result, the Trades and Labor Council

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69. R.T. & L.C. files. The Regina Trades and Labor Council complied with the Winnipeg request for publicity by pinning up a petition in Trades Hall but it was returned with only a few signatures. J. Sambrook (secretary of the R.T. & L.C.) to E. Robinson (Wpg. Trades and Labor Council) April 18, 1918.

70. R.T. & L.C. files. R.T. & L.C. to all affiliated locals, Jan. 31, 1919.

there strenuously protested the fact that possession was forbidden of "certain scientific literary works, e.g., Lewis H. Morgan's Ancient Society, Marx Capital /sic/, etc. etc." published and distributed by Chas. H. Kerr & Co.[71] Another group to suffer from the revised censorship laws was the Socialist Party of Canada, which claimed that some of its incoming mail bore signs of having been tampered with and that some had even been confiscated. Some of its outgoing propaganda was alleged to have suffered the same fate.[72] The end of the war gave added strength to the argument that this Order-in-Council should be repealed as well.

Censorship and the fate of conscientious objectors, however, were not issues of immediate concern to the rank-and-file unionist in Saskatchewan. To him socialism was a nebulous utopian concept the ends and means of which were not very clear. Besides, while collective bargaining was perhaps a slower method than the revolution which some socialists advocated, it had at least been tried and proven effective. But even collective bargaining and labour's ultimate weapon, the strike, were threatened. The Government issued an Order-in-Council on July 11, 1918 (P.C. 1743) outlining a policy on industrial relations designed to curb interruptions in essential industries. The new policy recommended the following principles to alleviate the necessity of strikes and lockouts: (1) the right of both employers and employees

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71. R.T. & L.C. files. V.R. Midgley (secretary Vancouver Trades and Labor Council) to all Trades and Labor Councils, Nov. 23, 1918.

72. R.T. & L.C. files. C. Stephenson (secretary Dominion Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Canada) to R.T. & L.C., Jan. 1, 1919.

to organize into associations and unions, but without the closed shop in the case of the latter; (2) safeguards to protect health and safety; (3) a living wage to vary with the cost of living; (4) equal pay for women for equal work; (5) emphasis to be placed on maximum production; and (6) the settlement of disputes to be through the channels provided by the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act and the Board of Appeal. The Appeal Board was provided by the Order-in-Council to deal with disputes in which the findings of the conciliation board had been rejected. In all cases the decision of the Board was final.[73]

P.C. 1743 was merely a declaration of principles and posed no immediate threat. As a result, little attention was paid to it until these principles became the basis for the Order-in-Council of October 11, 1918 (P.C. 2525) which, to all intents and purposes, forbade the right to strike:

> Any person who during the continuance of the present war shall incite, order or participate in a lockout or strike as defined in the said Industrial Disputes Investigation Act...in any industry mentioned therein or to which the said Act is applicable either in virtue or its terms, or of any Act of Parliament or Order in Council amending the same, or in connection with the operation of any Railway in Canada, before, during or after any investigation by a Board of Conciliation established under the said Act or amendments, or by a Board of Appeal...shall be guilty of an offence....

Based on the assumption that the machinery created by the establishment of the Board of Appeal and the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act was adequate to handle all exigencies, P.C. 2525 provided for fines

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73. See The Labour Gazette, Aug. 1918, pp. 616-8. The Board of Appeal referred to was composed of two representatives nominated by the T.L.C. Executive Council and two nominated by the Executive of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, with a Chairman nominated by the Board or the Minister of Labour.

not exceeding $1,000. or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months, for any person violating the principles set down in the July 11 Order-in-Council. Furthermore, any person of military age who violated P.C. 252 would "ipso facto be deemed to be a soldier enlisted in the military forces of Canada and subject to military law for the duration of the present war and of demobilization thereafter and shall forfeit any exemption granted to him and any right to apply for or obtain any exemption from military service under the Military Service Act."[74]

The reaction in Western Canada was almost immediate. Although the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council claimed that it was unable to hold meetings because of a Health Department ban, a strike vote was taken among its affiliates with the result that a "huge" majority had showed willingness to walk out en masse if the Government chose to implement the Order-in-Council in question. "In the meantime, it is our conviction that there should be a Dominion-wide effort put forward so that, if at any time in the future a definite challenge is thrown down, Labor will be in a position where it can act with precision and power....Never was there greater need for a manifestation of Labor than on this question--never was there greater need for that manifestation to be given quickly."[75]

The Regina Council followed the Winnipeg lead on October 28, by calling for a strike vote from its affiliates. Although the vote was probably never taken, the alarm expressed by the Council's recording secretary, Joe Sambrook, show labour's attitude toward P.C. 2525

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74. See Ibid., Nov. 1918, pp. 983-4.

75. R.T. & L.C. files. E. Robinson to R.T. & L.C., Oct. 28, 1918.

extremely well.

> Bros:- I wish to appeal to you through the Regina T. & L. Council and ask you if this is the way for those to whom we vested the power; to deal with us; it as /sic/ been proved time and time again that the worker as /sic/ nobly borne without flinching his share of the burden entailed through the present war; and it is only through the ever increasing cost of living that the worker has had to resort to his last hope the Strike; I venture to say that if the Government had only have seen /sic/ to it that the profiteering that as /sic/ been so apparent to all, had been stopped, there would not have been the unrest throughout the Dominion that there is at the present time. 76

A fortnight later the Trades and Labor Congress took a stand and issued a circular defining its position on the various restrictive Orders-in-Council, of which the one banning strikes was deemed to be the most odious. However, three days after the circular was issued another Order-in-Council (P.C. 2808) rescinded P.C. 2525.[77] Its repeal did not receive the same publicity as its enactment, however, and the suspicion that the Orders had been drafted with a view to furthering the concentration of power in the hands of eastern business interests who worked hand in hand with the government was never removed.

It should not be thought that P.C. 1743 and P.C. 2525 were drafted to remove the possibility of labour disputes. Rather, they were based on the hope that the rising tide of industrial unrest threatening the war effort could be stemmed. The rising cost of living, the employers who met demands for higher wages with platitudes on patriotism, the shortage of skilled labour coupled with the sinister activities of governmental agencies—all caused unrest and made trade unionists in-

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76. R.T. & L.C. files. R.T. & L.C. to all affiliated locals, Oct. 30, 1918.

77. R.T. & L.C. files. Tom Moore (T.L.C. president) to all affiliated bodies, Nov. 16, 1918.

creasingly disdainful of the numerous pleas to win the war before concerning themselves with anything else.

In Canada as a whole the number of strikes jumped from a total of 152 in the period 1914-16 to 141 in 1917 and to a crest of 169 in 1918.[78] Once again one sees western Canada playing a leading role in this sequence of statistics: the miners struck in Fernie, the civic employees in Vancouver, the teamsters, waterworks men and electricians in Winnipeg, and the freight handlers in Calgary, this last strike having widespread repercussions even in Edmonton. The list is long, and for this reason the Canadian Annual Review devotes nine pages to the major disputes alone.[79]

The same trend can be seen in Saskatchewan. Only two major disputes took place in each of 1914 and 1915. In 1916 the number jumped to six, down to five in 1917 and up to nine in 1918. In the nine disputes of 1918, 1,015 workers were affected with a resultant accumulated loss of 24.6 years in work time.[80] The time lost suggests that these disputes were bitter, drawn-out contests, and again Regina was the hardest hit with seven strikes. Because of the lack of industrialization in the province, the building trades still held the spotlight but two of the most bitter disputes involved the telephone operators and the postal workers, both working within service industries.

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78. C.A.R., 1918, p. 330.

79. Ibid., pp. 329-37.

80. Statistic tables, Saskatchewan Bureau of Labour Report, 1919, pp. 22-3.

The mail carriers' strike certainly started with a bang, and was perhaps the first and last time that a strike in Saskatchewan was carried forward on a gigantic wave of sympathy from almost every segment of society. The July 24, 1918 edition of the Morning Leader, in announcing in a bold red headline "REGINA SOLIDLY WITH MAIL CARRIERS", struck those who expected their mail at a specific time like a bombshell. There had been little warning; a press release in the Leader on the 22nd stated that the Regina postmen would walk out with postal workers across Canada unless the demands for immediate payment of a promised war bonus, a minimum wage, and the appointment of a conciliation board were met. The same press release stated that Regina postmaster Nichol conceded the bonus, but the most important demand was the conciliation board, as there was no provision under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act to handle disputes between the Government and its employees.[81] Another press release the next day stated that even though the letter carriers had walked out on the 22nd in most major centres including Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Prince Albert, their Regina counterparts had decided to wait for further word from Ottawa.

Further word did not come, however, and the Regina postmen walked out on the morning of Tuesday, the 23rd, followed by the postal clerks in the afternoon. So began a strike which lasted almost ten days and rivalled in the publicity it received the long-awaited provincial exhibition which was to begin the following Monday. Mail began to

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81. The files of the Morning Leader, July 22 to August 1, 1918 have been the primary source for the postal workers' strike. Where other sources were used these have been cited.

pile up immediately, only postal officials remaining to process it, with consequent inconvenience to all those served by the post office. However, there was an almost immediate realization by the population as a whole that the postal workers had a legitimate grievance. This was especially true in view of the fact that they had only received an increase of $100.00 per year in the period 1914-18 -- small indeed compared with the cost of living increase during that period. As President Redman of the Postal Clerks' Association stated, "We have stood it for three years and that is about as long as we can be expected to put up with these conditions."

On the afternoon of the 23rd, a joint meeting of the City Council, the Board of Trade and the Wholesale and Retail Merchants' Association was held in City Hall at which representatives of the Regina Letter Carriers' Union stated their case. Following this, a resolution was passed asking the Post Office Department to meet the postal workers' demands for a conciliation board. It was also found that other prominent citizens, when interviewed by the Leader, sympathized with the strikers. This group included the leaders of the W.C.T.U., the Council of Women, and of local service and sports clubs. Only Regina's M.P., Dr. W.D. Cowan, condemned the strike. It was his opinion that the problem was "purely departmental." "We want a postmaster general. We haven't got one. We should have had one months ago. No one cabinet minister can properly handle two departments under present strenuous conditions. I would rather have two too many ministers than one too few....We can't afford a headless department, and we can't afford strikes. Give me a postmaster general and cut the strike out." There was a Postmaster-General, however. Cowan probably had not been informed

that P.E. Blondin had just returned from Europe and had immediately been appointed to the Senate where he still retained the Postmaster-General's portfolio.[82]

In Saskatoon a meeting of local businessmen with the postal workers--similar to that held in Regina the previous day--took place on the 24th and a similar resolution was passed. In Moose Jaw, however, a meeting of businessmen was held on the 26th in the Board of Trade Building without the strikers present. It was decided that if the strike continued those present would lend aid to the postal officials in the form of temporary staff from their own businesses to see that the mail was processed.

While Saskatchewan postal workers were busy mustering popular support, the postmen and clerks in eastern Canada, the source of the original demand for strike action, reached an agreement with the Government. As a result the postal clerks in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw and the complete staff in Regina returned to work on the night of the 24th, without knowing the terms of settlement. The Regina decision was reached at a mass meeting in Trades Hall and an open letter of thanks was drafted to the citizens of the city for the sympathy that had been extended. This letter, however, proved to be premature.

When it was learned that the settlement accepted in the East did not include the appointment of a conciliation board, the postal workers

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82. C.A.R., 1918, p. 435. Blondin had been defeated in the 1917 Election, thereby necessitating his appointment to the Senate so that he could retain his portfolio.

in Winnipeg refused to return to work. Those in the other western centres walked out once again on the afternoon of the 25th after being back at work less than one day. This time their attitude was noticeably one of increased persistence. Further impetus was given to their efforts when the railway mail clerks threatened to walk out in sympathy if strike breakers were brought in.

In Regina a mass meeting was held on the night of the 25th, attended by upwards of 200 men. Two delegates from each union were sent to confer with the central committee in Winnipeg, the recognized pivotal point of the strike throughout Western Canada. Also, a decision was made to have a public meeting the next day at City Hall to maintain public support. Other than this, the primary concern was to stand pat and wait for word from Winnipeg.

On the 26th, C.J. Doherty, the acting Prime Minister, issued a statement to all postmasters telling them to dispense with the services of all men who refused to return to work immediately, bearing out the fears of the strikers. Added to this, President J.C. Watters of the T.L.C. refused to support the strike on the grounds that the western postal workers had been rash in not exhausting all channels of negotiation before striking. Watters' decision was received with some disappointment while Doherty's statement was greeted with resolution. As one Regina postman was reported to have said, "It was better to hold out for a principle than to lose their job...He was now drawing the handsome salary of $71.30 a month, and he was sure he could get more than this almost anyplace /sic/ else."[83]

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83. The Morning Leader, July 27, 1918, p. 15.

The announcement that strike breakers would be used brought the first formal reaction from the Trades and Labor Council in Regina, though it had informally voiced support since the beginning. At a special meeting held on the afternoon of Sunday the 28th, a resolution was passed stating that a mass meeting would be called to take a sympathetic strike vote if strike breakers crossed the picket lines.[84] This coincided with a similar motion passed by the Winnipeg Council the same day. Similar threats were also made in other western centres. Before the resolution was discussed, however, the Federal Government was castigated roundly. The position taken by the Trades Council was at variance with that taken by the citizens' meeting held on the morning of the 26th, which was that, although the postal workers had made their point in striking, inasmuch as the Government had appointed an investigation committee the men should return to work and wait for the results of the inquiry. However, even though the citizens had lost their initial enthusiasm, hope still remained because the railway mail clerks had given assurances that they would strike on Monday afternoon.

In the meantime, Hon. T.W. Crothers, the Minister of Labour, was interviewing the strike committee in Winnipeg. While there, he also admitted that the postmen had a legitimate grievance and that he would attempt to use his influence in wringing concessions from the Cabinet. However, as the situation was still stalemated, the Regina post office took on strike breakers on the 29th, resulting

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84. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, July 28, 1918 meeting.

in the threatened meeting of the Trades Council that evening at which a referendum on a sympathetic strike from all the unions in the city was called for.[85] At the meeting, J. Sambrook (Bricklayers) was appointed strike secretary.

The Minister of the Interior, Arthur Meighen, joined Crothers in Winnipeg on the 30th and an offer was made that if the postal employees returned to work the civil service commission would be instructed to initiate an inquiry. The proposal, however, was refused by the strike committee. Meanwhile, the prospect of a general strike throughout Western Canada became more and more imminent as strike breakers remained at work.

Wednesday, the 30th, saw the first positive return on the strike referendum, from the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union, No. 1. But the bricklayers' expression of loyalty proved to be unnecessary. Before other returns were received, the strike committee in Winnipeg accepted the civil service commission inquiry and an increase in wages on the evening of the 31st. On receipt of the news, postal employees in Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert returned to work to clear the large backlog of unprocessed mail. Those in Moose Jaw, remembering what had taken place at the time of the previous settlement, held out for a few hours until further word had been received as to the terms of settlement. In less than a week mail service was back to normal.

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85. Ibid., July 29, 1918 meeting.

All those involved in the strike, and the labour movement in Western Canada generally, claimed a resounding victory for the principle of collective bargaining, although the principle had not been conclusively secured. The labour temples in all centres were filled with jubilant workers congratulating each other. The success of the strike is not the principle reason for devoting so much space to it, however. Nor is its sensational nature or the public sympathy it aroused. The strike had a deeper significance. Because the Government was directly affected, this dispute exemplifies better than any other the dissatisfaction of organized labour with the Federal administration. The fact that there was large scale non-union acceptance of the postal workers' grievances implies a similar sentiment among the public at large. The use of strike breakers only heightened the dissatisfaction. Watters' statement, and the fact that the postal employees in the East accepted a settlement far inferior to the original demands, indicated the growing cleavage between the conservative eastern and the more radical western unionists, a cleavage wide enough that the western postal employees visualized separate western unions in the not too distant future because of a basic incompatibility.[86] The fact that a general sympathetic strike loomed in all centres, and the relative speed with which unionists sanctioned such a strike as an expedient, is an accurate yardstick by which to measure the gravity of the situation.

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86. The Morning Leader, Aug. 1, 1918, p. 10. A Federation of Western Postal Employees was formed in October, 1918 and this body became affiliated with the R.T. & L.C. on October 14. R.T. & L.C. Minutes, October 14, 1918 meeting.

CHAPTER 5

SASKATCHEWAN AND THE ONE BIG UNION

The increasing number of disputes as the war progressed seems to indicate that the objectives of the unionists were not merely higher wages, shorter hours and the granting of conciliation boards where they did not exist. Knowing full well that no one really wins any strike, they were fighting seeming injustices in the system in the only way they knew how. Therefore, strike actions seems in part at least, to have been only a means of relieving frustration. Alleged scandals, irregularities and profiteering, increasing government restriction on the freedom of the individual, a steadily rising cost of living together with apparently deaf governing bodies indicated that the whole framework of Canadian society had not been constructed for the benefit of the working man. When the Trades and Labor Congress, the body representative of the working man, seemed to be equally deaf and unable to take a firm stand, frustration was bound to be correspondingly increased.

Even with the end of the war in November, 1918 the hostility of western unionists toward their counterparts in the East, as witnessed during the postal workers' strike, did not cease. As a result, radicals who felt that far reaching changes should be made in the system, starting with the trade union movement, were given a more sympathetic hearing by an increasing number of unionists, especially in Western Canada. Perhaps some of their schemes

were far-fetched to the rank-and-file unionists but at least they offered a concrete alternative, and they backed the alternative with enthusiasm. D.C. Masters in The Winnipeg General Strike described the wartime atmosphere in the following manner.

> As it /the war/ progressed a new note became apparent in the western labour movement: a vigorous note of protest. Labour was less docile, more impatient with grievances and with the obstacles to their remedy. It had embarked upon a new era characterized by increasing irritation and by more extreme proposals for reform. [1]

The registration issue and the postal strike indicated that all was not right with organized labour in the Dominion, but the 1918 T.L.C. Convention at Quebec in September indicated that the "new era" for western unionists was approaching. A noticeable division between eastern and western trade unionists existed within the T.L.C. and part of it had to do with representation in the Convention. Because one delegate was invited for each one hundred members, the system did not afford sectional equality. The preponderance of industry in the East gave Ontario and Quebec numerical superiority and, because of the number of delegates present at a convention, no meeting place west of the Great Lakes, except Winnipeg and Vancouver, was large enough to accommodate them. Consequently, conventions were held in cities far removed from the centres of western union strength, which made it expensive for most locals to send their full complement of delegates. Although some pressure was placed on the central body

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[1] Masters, D.C., The Winnipeg General Strike, Toronto, 1950, p. 6.

to help defray the expense of sending delegates, this proved fruitless.[2] However, at this juncture (1918), most western bodies felt it imperative that the western point of view be voiced, and funds were raised by any means possible.

The viewpoint of western labour was voiced: a proposal for a Workmen's and Soldiers' Council, opposition to Victory Bonds, the benefits to be gained from threats of a general strike, attacks on patriotism, the advocacy of industrial unionism. But all these suggestions and opinions were buried with little ceremony.[3] The result was another block placed on a growing pile of frustration--frustration with almost everything. As one exasperated speaker put it, "...since the war began we have seen such poor results on war measures by those who are supposed to have the power vested in them that we are beginning to despair of ever seeing anything adequate done to meet the emergencies that have arisen and are arising day by day."[4]

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[2] The Regina Council passed the following resolution on August 28 to be submitted to the T.L.C. Convention:
"Whereas in our opinion the Trades and Labor Congress Conventions are not attended as fully as they might be, owing to the very high cost of travelling and hotel expenses of delegates from far off towns and cities, And whereas in our opinion the convention should have delegates from all its affiliated bodies as far as possible, so as to get a general knowledge of the existing conditions in every district in the Dominion, Therefore be it resolved that we the Regina T. & L. Council go on record as favoring the Trades Congress of Canada defraying the expenses of delegates...." R.T. & L.C. files. J. Sambrook to P.M. Draper, Sept. 7, 1918.

[3] C.A.R., 1918, pp. 340-1.

[4] R.T. & L.C. files. J. Sambrook to Army and Navy Veterans Assoc., Feb. 16, 1918.

Only after the ecstasy that followed the announcement of the armistice had died down did those who had "the power vested in them" begin to realize that there were reasons for the large-scale industrial unrest that gripped the nation in the closing days of the war. To establish what the reasons were was the prescribed duty of the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, approved by Order-in-Council early in April, 1919, under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Mathers of Winnipeg. It was to "(1) consider and make suggestions for securing a permanent improvement in the relations between employers and employees; (2) to advise methods for ensuring that industrial conditions affecting relations between employers and employees should be reviewed from time to time by those concerned, with a view to improving conditions in the future."[5]

After spending seven weeks on the road, gathering information and hearing representations in twenty-eight centres from Victoria to Sydney, N.S., the Mathers Commission Report was presented to the House of Commons on July 1.[6] The Report recognized that there existed legitimate grievances among organized labour for the following reasons: "Unemployment and the fear of unemployment; high cost of living in relation to wages and desire of the worker for a larger share of the product of his labour; desire for shorter hours of

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[5] C.A.R., 1919, p. 506.

[6] Ibid. The Mathers Commission was composed of Hon. T.G. Mathers, Hon. Smeaton White and Charles Harrison, M.P. representing the people; Carl Riordon and Frank Pouzé representing the employers; and Tom Moore and J.W. Bruce representing labour.

labour and denial of the right to organize, or refusal to recognize Unions; denial of collective bargaining; lack of confidence in constituted government and insufficient and poor housing; restrictions upon the freedom of speech and press, and ostentiatious display of wealth; lack of equal educational opportunities."[7] To remedy this situation, the Report recommended the following legislation:

> Fixing of a Minimum wage, especially for women, girls and unskilled labour.
>
> Maximum work-day of 8 hours and weekly rest of not less than 24 hours.
>
> State Insurance against unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age.
>
> Proportional representation.
>
> Regulation of public works to relieve unemployment and help for the building of workers' homes.
>
> Establishment of a Bureau for promoting Industrial Councils.
>
> Restoration of fullest liberty of freedom of speech and press.
>
> Recognition of the right to organize and of Unions.
>
> Payment of a living wage, collective bargaining and extension of equal opportunities in education.
>
> Steps toward establishment of Joint Plant and Industrial Councils. 8

The Report of the Mathers Commission also recognized that there existed distinct differences between East and West and that in the latter industrial unrest was far more pronounced. The brief presented to the Commission by the Regina Trades and Labor Council on May 8 mirrors the discontent rather well.

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[7] Ibid., p. 507.

8 Ibid., p. 508.

It is rather important to note that one of the Regina Council's more radical delegates, Joe Sambrook of the Bricklayers, was chosen to read its submission. Rather uncompromising in tone, it severely criticized the rising cost of living, the press, the profiteering businessmen and the extremely low wages. No constructive proposals were presented, however, because the Council had no confidence in the Government or its Royal Commission. The Commissioners were told:

> This council is of the opinion that the only thing which it could sincerely recommend as a remedy for the present conditions, is one which it would be useless to propose through your commission to the Government, and they believe that when the effective remedy is finally found and put into operation it will be devised by working people themselves, and they themselves will put it into effect without the help of employers or those who have been instrumental in maintaining and operating the present system of exploitation. 9

When questioned by the Commission, Sambrook saw the only real solution as lying in the Russian soviet form of government because when capital and labour got together the only result was mutual insincerity.

Thus far, a number of possible reasons for discontent among the ranks of organized labour have been enumerated: economic depression, the ever rising cost of living, registration, censorship, conscription, the conservatism and complacency of the T.L.C., seemingly deaf federal, provincial and civic administrations, more prone to coercion than to the pursuit of democratic ideals, and equally deaf employers. Also evident in this period was a growing acceptance of the ideas of the vocal, radical minority which tended to

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9 The Morning Leader, May 9, 1919, pp. 3, 10, 11.

flourish rather than diminish with the end of the war. An attempt has been made to point out the means by which the discontent manifested itself through mass meetings, direct political action, strongly worded resolutions, and an increasing number of industrial disputes. In the opinion of the writer, however, there was one other factor producing discontent among organized labour in Saskatchewan.

D. C. Masters, in his book The Winnipeg General Strike, speaks of the "congenital antipathy" between labour and the agricultural populace, which grew even more pronounced as the war drew to a close, even though they held similar convictions. Masters, however, confines his analysis to Manitoba and Alberta. Perhaps he is right in reference to these two provinces, but in ignoring the situation in Saskatchewan he misses important evidence of farmer-labour co-operation. First, comparing the situation in Saskatchewan with that in Alberta, it seems clear that unlike her western neighbour, Saskatchewan lacked a great deal of non-agricultural primary industry, with the exception of a minor coal industry located in the Estevan-Bienfait-Taylorton district. Without such industry, Saskatchewan was also lacking in any concentrated labour radicalism of the I.W.W. - Western Federation of Miners variety--a radicalism which tended to alienate agrarian sympathy because of its connection with violence and bloodshed.

The differences between Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which made the latter more susceptible to farmer-labour co-operation, are more numerous. For one thing, Winnipeg was a recognized urban centre

with an urban mentality, whereas Saskatoon and Moose Jaw were still fledgling prairie settlements and Regina was still referred to as "Pile-o'-Bones." As a result there was greater social homogeneity and of necessity a close co-operation between farmer and worker. The cases are many of the artisan who, finding himself without a job for a period of time, went to work on the land, only to return when the situation there became desperate or if the spirit moved him. With such movements of individuals, a divergence of opinion on basic issues was almost impossible; to all intents and purposes, farmer and labourer were one. The party organ for the Liberals in Regina, The Leader, continually lauded the efforts of organized labour in its attempts to better itself, even though the party was almost wholly dependent on the agricultural community for its strength in the legislature.

A larger economic consideration is also evident. Because Winnipeg had become the processing and clearing centre for all goods between the Great Lakes and the Rockies, there tended to be a greater feeling of self-sufficiency and independence among its inhabitants because it was virtually impossible to maintain an intimate contact with that large area. Also, the fact that Winnipeg was a comparatively large city added to the self-sufficiency of its people. In Saskatchewan, on the other hand, the main centres of labour strength were small indeed in comparison and the economic prosperity of each was dependent of a much smaller area. Thus, urban centres could not be independent and self-sufficient. There was not enough in the urban

area for it to maintain itself. As a result, the unwritten rule that "as goes the farmer, so goes everyone else" was (and still is) continually true. Consequently, similar circumstances and conditions could not help but shape similar ideas and ideals.

But how did this co-operation manifest itself? Perhaps the most important connection between farmers and urban workers was that far-sighted group of radical reformers whose views transcended economic groups and who saw labourer and farmer alike as producers of commodities essential to the well-being of the nation.[10] Such individuals as the farmer from Tantallon, J.E. Paynter, and the worker from the Moose Jaw railway yards--and organizer for the American Society of Equity--Edward Stevenson, continually talked and wrote about greater farmer-labour co-operation for basic, mutual ends. Both of these men were present at the founding convention of the People's Political Association in Regina in June, 1908. They were joined by delegates from the Comrades of Equity (a farmers' organization with its origins in Edmonton), the Trades and Labor Councils from Regina and Moose Jaw, the Regina Branch of the Canadian Labor Party, and the Independent Producers of Battleford District. The main aim of the Association was political action and its platform of sixteen items included the entire platform of the Comrades as well as a number of current demands by organized labour such as an eight hour day, the abolition of child labour, a factory act, and the restriction of oriental immigration. Although the

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[10] Spafford, D.S., "'Independent' Politics in Saskatchewan", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, 1965, 1-9. In various conversations with Mr. Spafford the author has become convinced that the roots of farmer-labour co-operation were many and varied.

Association was destined for an early death, the principle of farmer-labour co-operation had been established in an actual organization.

Later examples of co-operation appeared in other forms. Both farmers and labour advocated direct legislation and proportional representation. Both joined the same co-operative societies in an attempt to counter the rising cost of living. Both expressed the same degree of discontent with the Federal regimes during the war. As a result, there was an exchange of delegates between the Regina Trades and Labor Council and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association in December, 1918.[11] With the attempt to form a Regina branch of the Federated Labour Party in March, 1919, a proposal was made to have the platform suitable to the farming populace as well as to labour. Some segments of the agrarian community also felt that joint political action would be advantageous. One farmers' newspaper stated in reference to the platform of the Labour Party that "it contains the program of the large section of labor which looks to securing the reforms it desires, by constitutional means. This platform has not been widely circulated outside of the ranks of organized labor, and is, therefore, not so well known as it should be."[12] The editor was convinced that a party of farmer, labourer and returned soldier could be a viable entity if it was "properly

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[11] R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Dec. 23, 1919 meeting.

[12] The Morning Leader, March 21, 1919, pp. 11, 13. See also Turner's Weekly, May 3, 1919, p. 6.

fed and taken care of."[13] As well, the farmers borrowed heavily from the intellectual currency of the labour movement. The first constitution of the Farmers' Union of Canada formed in Ituna in 1921, "was based directly on the constitution of the One Big Union. Whole sections were taken over without significant change, including large parts of the Marxian preamble."[14]

But perhaps the best example of mutual farmer-labour sentiment in Saskatchewan was the agrarian reaction to the Winnipeg General Strike and the various feeble sympathetic strikes which took place in Saskatchewan in May and June, 1919. Whereas Masters states that in the keystone province "farmer opinion seems to have been unanimous against the strike and practically every rural newspaper in the province condemned it,"[15] Saskatchewan farmers saw the affair from a different perspective. An editorial in the influential Turner's Weekly, which had a circulation of over 6,500 and was the predecessor of the present day Western Producer, exemplifies their sentiments rather well.

> It has been generally admitted that there can be no peace in the industrial world without co-operation and mutual concessions by employers and employees; but, in spite of the universal adoption of the union principle, this handful of factory-owners in Winnipeg has plunged

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13 Turner's Weekly, May 31, 1919, p. 9 (cartoon).

14 Spafford, D.S., "The Origin of the Farmers' Union of Canada," Saskatchewan History, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, 1965, pp. 89-98.

15 Masters, D.C., The Winnipeg General Strike, p. 70.

> the city into a state of absolute commercial and industrial chaos by their steadfast clinging to the old idea that their allegiance to their own personal bank accounts far outstrips any claims upon them by the men whose lives depend on their activities, and by the public of which they, under the present system, form a necessary part. These standpat employers adopt the attitude of King Canute, and order the tide to halt. In the case of the ancient king, he was the only man who suffered loss of dignity and wet feet, but in the Winnipeg instance, the innocent bystanders are in a fair way to be drowned. There is in Canada no law which can be evoked to compel the metal magnates to treat with the union of their employees, but there is no doubt that, if future occurences /sic/ of the kind are to be avoided in other Canadian cities, the most drastic legislation will have to be placed on the statute books. The time has come when the man or men who stand out against the progress of the worker towards a more legitimate share in the production of the country, must be considered a more dangerous man to the safety of the state than the most rabid Bolshevist or the ruddiest of Reds. Those who hold that the old pre-war order can go quietly on its way, capital taking what it likes and labor what it can get, must be made to realize that the war has pulled down industrial junkerism just as surely as it has demolished the military junkers of Germany.[16]

In a subsequent edition, the Weekly cautioned moderation on the part of both the employers and strikers, but the editor could not swallow the allegations that the strike was strictly the work of foreign revolutionaries. Rather, "we are of the opinion that the principles which the labor men say are at the bottom of the strike--that is, the right to transact business with their employers through their unions--is fair and just and is a principle which ought to be conceded by every employer of labor. We believe.... that certain employers who refused to recognise this principle,

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[16] Turner's Weekly, May 24, 1919, p. 1.

are the men chiefly responsible for the strike."[17] Even when the strike showed indications of spreading to Saskatchewan no adverse criticism appeared. The editor reasoned that it was part of the overall picture of unrest in the province.[18]

Thus it is clear that there was no antagonism between farmers and urban workers of the sort found in Manitoba. The farmer-labour co-operation of the first two decades of the century was symptomatic of the general unrest in the province, and therefore, the agrarian protest movement which sank its roots deeply during the war years was an important influence leading up to the events of 1919. The cost of living, conscription, the shortage of manpower and the disenchantment with Borden and his cohorts resulted in a growing militancy within the agrarian community, as the increasing support for such organizations as the various provincial United Farmers groups, the Nonpartisan League and later the Progressive Party showed. With such an intimate rural-urban relationship as was evident in Saskatchewan both the farming and labouring communities showed a parallel development toward increased militancy in the face of similar obstacles.

In any sustained protest against the status quo there is usually a constructive alternative offered eventually. Western unionists went to the T.L.C. Convention in Quebec armed with alternatives--the six hour day and the five day week, and the reorganization of

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[17] Ibid., May 31, 1919, p. 7.

[18] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

the labour movement along industrial rather than craft lines. However, as has been pointed out, they were not even given a fair hearing and their suggestions were buried by the voting strength of the eastern unionists. The result was a separate meeting of the western caucus at which a decision was made to hold a western conference--the conference which gave birth to the One Big Union.

The roots of industrial unionism in Canada were many and varied. Based on the assumption that white-collar and some blue-collar workers could not benefit from the A.F.L. type of craft unionism, industrial unionism, by organizing all workers in a given industry, regardless of their trades, into a single large union, would give them greater collective bargaining power. Another basic assumption underlying the concept was a belief in the reality of the class-struggle. Herein lay the strong Marxian influence. But it was the British variant on the Marxian theme which believed in the amelioration of the plight of the worker through gradual change rather than through revolution which gave the impetus to the Western Canadian movement--a variant which had begun with the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union as early as the 1830's and which resulted in the Social Democratic Federation half a century later.[19] The American based Industrial Workers of the World had made some inroads a decade earlier among the miners in Alberta and British Columbia, but their

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[19] The chapter "Before the Strike" in Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike provides a brief account of the origins of the industrial union concept in Canada.

methods were too anarchistic for a relatively conservative group of craft unionists intent on development along established lines.

The first endorsement of the industrial union principle came in 1911 from the British Columbia Federation of Labour and the Calgary Trades and Labor Council, but only the war made it apparent to many that the principle had to become a reality. At the Quebec Convention a skeleton committee was formed with Dave Rees, a United Mine Workers organizer, as chairman and V.R. Midgely as secretary. The purpose of the committee was to prepare the ground for the advent of industrial unionism. In the interval between September, 1918 and the Western Canada Labor Conference the following March, a great deal of propaganda was broadcast throughout the country as part of a publicity campaign. As a result, it was not long before the assertion was made that "B.C. are /sic/ solidly for the thing and so is /sic/ Saskatchewan and Manitoba."[20]

Surprisingly, there was little discussion by Saskatchewan unionists prior to the conference of the issues to be dealt with at Calgary, if the minutes and correspondence are any indication. Under the impetus provided by the B.C. Federation of Labor, the conference was called for March 13. Seventeen delegates from Saskatchewan were chosen and given credentials.

Even though all the delegates from Saskatchewan were guiding lights within their own unions and within the trades councils, their

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[20] Ibid., p. 32.

presence in Calgary was marked by a surprising lack of activity. As if inoculated with silent reverence for the significance of the occasion, they stood in awe as the delegates from the British Columbia and Alberta Federations of Labour and the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council performed. In all, ten Saskatchewan resolutions were accepted by the resolutions committee for discussion by the conference, but all were of the insignificant variety and most were carried with no discussion.[21]

To maintain the representative nature of the conference, Joe Sambrook was elected to the policy committee but Ralph Heseltine failed in his attempt to gain election to the central committee. Even in the lengthy and sometimes heated debate which flared during consideration of a number of resolutions, only the veteran of Moose Jaw unionism, James Somerville, managed to get in a few words of caution. He saw grave consequences if the industrial union idea divorced itself immediately from the craft idea. He felt that a large margin of support should be gleaned from the crafts first. "I say it is a serious proposition if we attempt to inaugurate this movement without the great majority in support, it is going to be in the same place as the time the children of Israel wanted to go to the flesh pots rather than face the music."[22]

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[21] In the April 5, 1919 edition of The Winnipeg Tribune is a verbatim report of the Calgary Conference.

[22] Ibid., p. 8

Hasty decision had not been the original intention of the western caucus, according to David Rees, who chaired the first day of the conference. There was no intention of breaking with the T.L.C., but when Rees vacated the chair to attend to some union matter in the United States, the conference did an about-face as the radical delegates took hold. The result was the two following resolutions:

From W.A. Pritchard of Vancouver:

> Whereas great and far-reaching changes have taken place during the last year in the realms of industry;
>
> And whereas we have discovered through painful experiences the utter futility of separate action on the part of the workers, organized merely along craft lines, such action tending to strengthen the relative position of the master class;
>
> Therefore, be it resolved, that this Western Labour Conference place itself on record as favouring the immediate reorganization of the workers along industrial lines, so that by virtue of their industrial strength the workers may be better prepared to enforce any demand they consider essential to their maintenance and well being;
>
> And be it further resolved, that in view of the foregoing, we place ourselves also on record as being opposed to the innocuity /sic/ of labour leaders lobbying parliament for palliatives which do not palliate.

From the B.C. Federation of Labour:

> Resolved, that this convention recommend to its affiliated membership the severance of their affiliation with international organizations, and that steps be taken to form an industrial organization of all workers....

These two resolutions became the basis for the seven point declaration of policy as outlined in the following report of the policy committee:

> First, the name of the organization. We recommend the name of the organization be "The One Big Union."
>
> Second, we recommend the convention elect a committee of five irrespective of geographical location, for the purpose of carrying out the necessary propaganda to make the referendum /on the principle of industrial unionism/ a success.
>
> Third, and further recommend that delegates from each province meet and elect a committee of five to work in conjunction with the central committee in carrying on the necessary propaganda to accomplish the wishes of the convention.
>
> Fourth, we recommend the drafting and issuing of the referendum be left to the "central committee," also receiving and publishing the returns of the vote.
>
> Fifth, in the opinion of the committee it will be necessary in establishing an industrial form of organization to work through the existing trades councils and district boards, and no definite plan of organization can be submitted until after the referendum has been taken.
>
> Sixth, the committee further recommends that after the returns of the vote are received the central committee shall call a conference of representatives of trades council and district boards to perfect the plans of organization. Basis of representation, affiliated membership of 5,000 or less, one delegate; over 5,000, two delegates; over 10,000, three delegates.
>
> Seventh, we recommend, that an appeal be made to the trades councils and district boards for a payment of two cents per member affiliated to finance the educational campaign for the inauguration of the "One Big Union." 23

To co-ordinate the activities of the central committee with those in the provinces, provincial committees were elected. For Saskatchewan, the committee was composed of Heseltine (Chairman), Sambrook, McMurtry, Cropper and Munroe, and in their hands lay the

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23 Report on Labour Organization, 1919, p. 23

responsibility of disseminating the industrial union gospel and of convincing craft unionists that their ways were antiquated.

With their heads crammed full of ideas, and their portfolios equally full of notes and propaganda, the disciples of industrial unionism and the rest of the delegates returned home immediately after the conference. Apparently, the first body to strike a blow for industrial unionism was the Moose Jaw Trades and Labour Council at its regular meeting held on March 18. W.H. Ward reported on the proceedings and the decisions reached at the Calgary Conference, sparking a lengthy debate on the proposed One Big Union. Although no vote was taken, the opinion was that the methods of industrial capitalism were detrimental to the worker and a tentative acceptance of the O.B.U. was agreed upon. Even the more conservative unions concurred in this, though these advised caution.[24]

Not only was caution expressed, but the wisdom of the Regina Council having anything to do with the O.B.U. was also questioned at the regular meeting of that body on March 24. After W. Walker read his report on the Calgary Conference, the fear was expressed that the wrath of the A.F.L. and the international unions would descend on the members of the Council for their lack of faith in traditional institutions. In rebuttal it was stated that the internationals had little sympathy for Canadian conditions, as shown by the fact that Canada had only one representative on the

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[24] The Morning Leader, March 19, 1919, p. 16.

A.F.L. executive. With a population of eight million, Canada was capable of handling its own union affairs. As Alderman Perry stated: "We may as well take the bull by the horns right now. I don't see any use of going behind the screens. Personally, I should like to see everything done in the open."[25] The result was that one hundred copies of the Calgary Conference report were ordered and Secretary Midgely's request for the first O.B.U. per capita assessment was complied with. As a further vote of confidence, the delegates present were canvassed for special donations on the promise that more concrete action would be taken after the Saskatchewan O.B.U. executive had made final arrangements for a mass meeting to be held at a later date.[26]

The first concerted opposition to the principles of industrial unionism came, as expected, from the Saskatchewan locals of the International Typographical Union. Of these, the first to express open resistance was the Moose Jaw Local No. 627. At its regular meeting on Saturday, April 5, the action of the Calgary Conference was criticised roundly and the meeting was climaxed by the following strongly-worded resolution, mirroring the attitude of a secure local, well satisfied with its union, working under closed-shop

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[25] Ibid., March 25, 1919, p. 9

[26] R.T. & L.C. Minutes, March 24, 1919, meeting.

conditions.

> Be it resolved that the Moose Jaw Typographical Union No. 627 places itself on record as being opposed to the "One Big Union" as adopted by the recent Calgary convention, and most emphatically declares itself as opposed to any break with the International Typographical Union.
>
> And be it further resolved, that this union is opposed to public expression of sympathy with the Russian Bolshevists and German Spartacan revolutionary movements.[27]

The Saskatoon Local No. 663 followed suit on the 10th, by voting unanimously against the O.B.U., not specifically because of its opposition to the industrial union principle, but rather because the O.B.U.'s advocacy of general and sympathetic strikes was contrary to the I.T.U. constitution.[28]

In case there were some within the I.T.U. who still had doubts, B.W. Bellamy, secretary of the Western Canada Conference of Typographical Unions, toured Western Canada in the middle of April with the expressed intention of breaking this heresy which had gripped the minds of Western unionists. Speaking in Saskatoon to a meeting attended predominantly by printers, he provided further backbone to the decision made by No. 663 four days previously. While in Regina, he was cornered by a reporter from The Leader to whom he gave a lengthy statement expressing the attitude of those who still clung tenaciously to the principle of international unions.

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[27] The Morning Leader, April 7, 1919, p. 3.

[28] Saskatoon Typographical Union Minutes, April 10, 1919 meeting.

Bellamy had no real aversion to industrial unionism but he foresaw great problems in the fact that the O.B.U. was "a purely Canadian proposition and would have to buck the unions across the line." If the workers in one centre held membership in the O.B.U. while those in a neighbouring centre held international affiliation, there could be no interchange of work. Another feature that Bellamy opposed was the O.B.U.'s contention that there was no necessity for hard and fast contracts between employer and employee, with mutual obligations. Thus, in the case of a strike, a sympathetic or general strike could be called by the central board, and all would walk out with no specific reasons, with no protection for the unfortunate employer. This last objection was the basis for Bellamy's belief that the One Big Union was merely an attempt by the socialists in Western Canada to put unionism in a state of chaos as a step toward achieving their own ends. He saw indications of this in the fact that the main resolutions passed at the Calgary Conference were proposed by the socialists of the British Columbia Federation of Labor. As well, in his opinion, those who opposed the international principle most vehemently all had strong socialist leanings. He said:

> The socialist movement is not in full sympathy with us. It is more to their interest to push us aside to further their own ends. The thing is that they saw in time which side of their bread the butter went on and took pains to join themselves with the trade unions, feeling that eventually they would be strong enough to gain control of these organizations and use that power to destroy them and remould them to their own ends....It /the O.B.U./ looks to me like the first movement to reduce organized labor to chaos, and then launch their Bolshevik propaganda....When

> we know that Bolshevism is going to be the emancipation of the wage earners, then will be the time to send them our fraternal greetings, and emulate them. 29

Bellamy must have smiled when the Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council reversed its previous decision at a special meeting held on April 15. Called to consider the questionnaire sent out from the O.B.U. central office in reference to the severance of affiliation "with the present international craft unions and becoming a part of one big industrial organization of all workers," the meeting lasted four long hours and tempers flared several times. Finally the O.B.U. proposition was defeated.[30]

The Regina Council, however, failed to be impressed by Bellamy's statement. In fact, he was censured by the Council not so much for what he said as for his cowardly action in remaining silent while in attendance at the Calgary Conference. However, the majority of the membership also opposed his views because they had "discovered through painful experiences the utter futility of separate action on the part of the workers, organized merely on craft lines, such action tending to strengthen the relative position of the Master class."[31] This sentiment (taken word for word from the primary resolution passed at Calgary) was expressed at a meeting of the

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29 The Morning Leader, April 19, 1919, p. 22

30 Ibid., April 16, 1919, p. 2. See also Daily News (Moose Jaw) April 16, 1919, p. 11

31 R.T. & L.C. Minutes, April 20, 1919, meeting.

Council on April 28 at which a unanimous vote of confidence was given to the One Big Union. The meeting was the best attended in a number of years, with some of the male delegates and visitors having to sit in the ante-room out of courtesy to the five members of the Women's Labor League who were seated on the Council for the first time. Joe Sambrook opened the discussion on the O.B.U. and he was followed by a number of vocal delegates, all with a great deal to say. The only adverse voice came from Bruce Switzer of the Typos, who protested the attack on Bellamy.[32] When he was placated, a committee of seven was chosen to discuss and report on the feasibility of forming industrial councils.

The results of the Council meeting were announced at the mass meeting of workingmen held in Trades Hall the next evening. Not since the January 3, 1918 meeting on registration had the hall seen so many people assembled, and again a number of women were present. All the correspondence received by Trades Council pertaining to the O.B.U. was read, providing the key for discussion of the virtues of industrial unionism by almost the whole spectrum of Regina "radical" unionists. Alderman Harry Perry expounded at great length on the decadence of the "old order", stating that the craft concept was virtually dead. Thus, "the working classes, in order to save themselves have got to organize industrially." In a more sober vein, A. B. Dunnett (Bricklayers) outlined the method to be taken by the

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[32] The Morning Leader, April 29, 1919, pp. 9, 11.

O.B.U. in the event of a strike, followed by Fred Kinsella (Bookbinders) who dealt with the broader aims of industrial unionism. "What do the workers want?" he asked, replying to his own question that "it must be realized that they want more power"--power which the O.B.U. could provide. Others followed, dealing with various other aspects of the subject. Among them was Ralph Heseltine who gave his impressions of the meeting. He then decided that there was no necessity of taking a vote "as not the slightest semblance of opposition asserted itself, despite the fact that several representatives of the printing trades, who are supposed to be opposed to it, were present."[33]

Although no conclusive returns are available as to the referendum vote taken in Regina on the O.B.U., the views expressed at the meeting of April 28th and 29th give a clear indication of the opinion of the majority. The members of the Regina Typographical Union decided in the negative and they were followed by the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks No. 35 and the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America No. 588, who decided to break their affiliation with Trades Council when that body pledged its support to the O.B.U.[34] Heseltine was delegated by

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[33] Ibid., April 30, 1919, p. 11. Even though the Regina Typographical Union opposed the O.B.U. it still donated a total of $25.00 to defray the cost of sending the delegation to the Calgary Conference. R.T. & L.C. files. A.E. Humphries to J. Sambrook, March 5 and April 9, 1919.

[34] They disaffiliated with the Council on May 13 and July 27 respectively. In the case of the Railway Clerks, a long verbal battle ensued with the secretary of the Council, Joe Sambrook as to what the actual role of unionism was. R.T. & L.C. files.

the Council to appear on June 4, 1919 at the conference of the O.B.U.[35] but, although its support was pledged, the Council does not appear to have affiliated directly. Instead, a body which the Department of Labour called a "Miscellaneous Unit" was formed in Regina with Heseltine as chairman and Xavier P. Burnell as secretary,[36] which operated in conjunction with the Council. A unit was also formed in Radville among some of the railway workers there. But by the end of 1919, disenchantment and even opposition began to grow. In Saskatchewan the P.M. Christopher incident best exemplifies this sentiment.

Christopher went into the Estevan coal fields in July 1920 to organize the miners there into a branch of the O.B.U. While there he was kidnapped and five men were arrested for the crime. At the trial which took place in October, the judge quashed the charge against two of the defendants. The remaining three were found not guilty by the jury.[37] Following the verdict there was no discussion by the Regina Trades Council. Had the incident taken place in the middle of 1919 there would have been immediate cries of treachery and favouritism.

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[35] R.T. & L.C. Minutes, May 26, 1919 meeting.

[36] Report on Labour Organization, 1920, p. 38.

[37] Ibid., p. 27.

Inadequate documentation makes it impossible to discover the differences between the reactions of various centres to the One Big Union. Some observations can be made, however, concerning the differences between the attitudes in Moose Jaw and Regina. First of all, it must be pointed out that there was support as well as opposition in both places. But for the record, Moose Jaw unionists opposed the O.B.U. while Regina unionists accepted it. The reason for this lay in the traditional makeup of unionism in the two centres. Moose Jaw Trades Council had among its membership a much larger number of the union elite--the railway brotherhoods--whose basic stand was usually quite conservative. Along with the Typos and other internationally-minded locals, they defeated the motion to join the O.B.U. In contrast, the Regina Council still derived its basic strength from the building trades, which had been hardest hit by the depressed conditions brought about by the emphasis on war expenditure. As a result, the most radical delegates to the Trades Council, notably Ralph Heseltine and Joe Sambrook, came from the building trades locals.

During the war those within the building trades who had the opportunity sought employment elsewhere; others joined the armed forces. Those who remained worked when possible, but most of the war years were taken up by a long running battle with the Builders' Exchange for a living wage--a wage which the Exchange felt it could not pay. Therefore, the strike involving the construction industry which began shortly before the Calgary Conference was merely a continuation of one long series of strikes rather than an entity in itself.

Late in the winter of 1918-19 the Building Trades Council in Regina submitted a schedule to the Exchange so as not to interfere with construction when the weather improved. The bricklayers asked for $1.00 an hour, an eight hour day, and a forty-four hour week; the plasterers requested 90 cents, the carpenters 80 cents and the painters 70 cents. All the requests were an increase of 15 cents per hour and were based on the fact that in the years 1914-18 the cost of living had increased 93.7 per cent while wages had only increased 20 per cent during the same period. This meant that in terms of real wages the men were working for less money than before the war.[38] However, they did express a willingness to negotiate.

After a number of lengthy meetings with the Building Trades Council and delegations from the various unions, the Builders' Exchange failed to reach an agreement with the men. The Exchange's second attempt at settlement late in March, 1919, also met with opposition from the Council. The proposal was, briefly, that a committee of four representatives from labour, four from the builders, four from the Great War Veterans' Association, and four private citizens be established to try and settle the dispute. In the case of the latter two groups, half of the members had to be non-union and non-business, while two of the remainder were to be appointed by the Exchange and two by the Council. The reaction of the Council was that such a committee would be unable to reach a fair decision in the light of the facts. These facts the Council

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[38] The Morning Leader, March 24, 1919, p. 9.

attempted to show in its press release:

> You stipulate that eight men of the proposed committee must not be connected with the building industry, or any trade union, and as such men could not possibly ascertain the conditions governing our crafts during a few hours debate, they could not intelligently render a decision. 39

As an alternative solution, more in keeping with what it felt to be the real reason for the high cost of building construction, the Council asked "if it was the intention of the exchange to appoint a similar committee to determine what constituted a fair and reasonable tender for any building to be constructed, or to arrange that the cost of the necessities of life should be fixed by arbitration, so that the cost of living would be adjusted to our arbitrated wages in such a manner that we would not be forced to reduce our standard of living?"[40]

Owing to the rejection of the proposed committee, a very confusing situation developed over the next seven weeks. With an estimated $2,000,000 worth of construction waiting upon a solution, further attempts at negotiation were made, but with little result. Some of the unions reached a settlement but later refused to return to work for some reason or other. Other groups of workers settled with the individual contractors without consulting the Council or the Exchange.[41] Further confusion resulted from the city's hiring

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[39] Ibid., p. 11.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., April 1, 1919, p. 9

non-union carpenters to construct a triumphal arch to welcome the "Fighting" Fiftieth Battalion on April 23. The Building Trades Council protested and those returned soldiers who were on strike refused to march under the arch.[42] However, all the member unions of the Council had straggled back to work by the beginning of May except for the carpenters, who claimed that they had been locked out on April 28 when the Exchange refused to continue negotiations. This decision caused the Trades and Labor Council to be mobilized. At its April 28th meeting, mention was made of a general strike to aid in settling the dispute.[43] At the next regular meeting (May 12) a motion recommending a general strike referendum was passed, and a strike committee of six was appointed. A further motion recommended that a special meeting be held at 3:00 p.m. on May 18, to hear the results of the strike vote.[44] By the time it convened, however, the carpenters had reached a settlement. In the meantime, what was to become known as the Winnipeg General Strike had begun.

The Winnipeg strike, which Masters states "seemed like a bolt from the blue" was, in the opinion of this writer, merely the fulfillment of a series of threats. The threat of the general sympathetic strike had been expressed with increasing frequency throughout

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[42] Ibid., April 23, 1919, p. 12.

[43] R.T. & L.C. Minutes, April 28, 1919 meeting.

[44] Ibid., May 12, 1919 meeting.

the war, and the One Big Union had even adopted it as a principle for the acquisition of power. But there is no indication of the Canadian Annual Review's contention that the One Big Union was responsible for the general strike in Winnipeg. By this time only the principle of the O.B.U. had been established at the Calgary conference in March, with only the barest framework having been constructed. At the tail end of the strike (June 11) another meeting was held in Calgary for a further discussion of organization. At this meeting it was reported that 24,239 workers from 188 unions had voted in favour of the One Big Union in the referendum that had been called.[45] However, support did not mean direct affiliation. Granted, there was some duplication of individuals between the membership of the O.B.U. and the strike committee in Winnipeg, but this is the extent of the formal connection. Both the One Big Union and the strike were merely manifestations of the same feeling of anxiety and discontent prevalent among organized labour in that period.

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[45] These figures do not include Winnipeg which had not reported. Report on Labour Organization, 1920, p. 23.

CHAPTER 6

SASKATCHEWAN REACTIONS TO THE WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE

The actual events of the Winnipeg General Strike have already been well described by D.C. Masters and it is unnecessary to recount them here. Rather, it is more important for the purpose of this study to examine the effect the strike had on organized labour in Saskatchewan.

It must be noted that, in Regina at least, the Winnipeg strike was not a signal for the establishment of strike machinery. In fact, Regina almost had a general strike simultaneously with the one in Winnipeg. The situation in the building trades--and among the carpenters specifically--which led the Regina Trades and Labor Council to call for a strike vote on May 12 has already been outlined. Ralph Heseltine was appointed to interview all union secretaries on the proposed strike and to all intents and purposes he was quite successful. He undoubtedly received the returns of the vote on the 16th and 17th with some excitement. The vote was as follows:[1]

Union	for	against
Plasterers	22	0
Bookbinders	25	0
Carpenters	100	0
Bricklayers	40	3
Labourers	60	0
Boilermakers	27	5
Railway Clerks	3	41
Electricians	200	0
Painters	25	10
	502	59

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[1] R.T. & L.C. files. Strike Committee report, May 17, 1919

It is interesting to note that these figures do not include all the returns received. The Women's Labor League voiced unanimous support,[2] as did the Amalgamated Postal Workers. The Barbers' International Union No. 713 was less decisive, voting 14 to 9 for strike action. The Musicians Mutual Protective Association (A.F. of M.) No. 446 asked for more time while the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen No. 345 turned down the proposal.[3] Still others, such as the Typographical Union, showed no interest at all. However, even though some of the returns not reported were adverse, the Council was satisfied that it had sufficient support to warrant the establishment of strike machinery. If the carpenters had not reached a settlement late in the evening of May 17 Regina might have been gripped by a general strike some time after the May 18 meeting.

The threat of a strike had proved successful and the carpenters' settlement was announced at the meeting on the 18th. Yet the Council decided to continue with the formation of general strike machinery "in the event of one ever being needed."[4] The strike committee was expanded to include one member from each union with the stated intention "to formulate a system whereby in the event of the necessity of a general strike we shall have certain well defined plans that will allow of us being assured of success." However, not until May 26 was

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[2] The Morning Leader, May 13, 1919, p. 9.

[3] The actual individual returns on the strike referendum are contained in the R.T. & L.C. files.

[4] R.T. & L.C. files. Executive report, May 26, 1919.

it deemed necessary to call a strike in sympathy with that in Winnipeg, and even then the enthusiasm that had been evident in the carpenters' strike was lacking. Even though a great deal of publicity was given to the Council's decision to call a general strike in sympathy with Winnipeg, a large number of Regina's parochially-minded rank-and-file unionists felt that the stakes were great enough to warrant a walkout. In this they concurred with The Leader, which had stated:

> The issue....is clear-cut and simple.
> If an attempt is made to deprive Regina citizens of a street car service, of electric light and power, of a water supply, of telephone service, of telegraphic communication, of postal services and mail deliveries of daily newspapers, of the services of carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, plumbers, barbers, and other artizans, it will not be because Regina citizens individually or collectively are at fault in any respect.
> No, it will be an attempt to impose hardship and inconvenience upon the citizens of Regina in order to intimidate certain employers in Winnipeg, and possibly the Government of the Dominion.
> Regina citizens are to be clubbed and punished for something which has occurred in another city and province, with which they have had nothing to do and over which they have and can exercise no control. 5

Perhaps indicative of the attitude of organized labour in Regina towards a strike in another centre was the fact that at the Trades Council executive meeting held on the evening of May 22, to discuss the Winnipeg situation, no business could be transacted as there were not enough members present. The questionable reason given for the poor showing was that most of the men in the city were working that evening.[6] However, enough were present to call another executive meeting for the following Sunday (May 25).

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5 The Morning Leader, May 27, 1919, p. 9.

6 Ibid., May 23, 1919.

Some of the doubt expressed by members of the Regina Council disappeared when two postal employees from Winnipeg, Rogers and Eldrick, spoke to a general meeting of the Council on May 26 with the expressed purpose of convincing the unionists of Regina to walk out in sympathy with Winnipeg. The reasons given were simple. "If the Winnipeg strike fails the cause of organized labor in Western Canada is dead for years to come. It is for this reason that the cause of the Winnipeg workers is the cause of the workers of Western Canada. Winnipeg is the main labor centre of the west, and it is essential that Labor's cause there shall not fail."[7] A telegram from Calgary urging strike action was also read, with the result that a motion was passed unanimously calling for a strike vote, the results of which were to be delivered under seal by the evening of the 28th. In order to inform the rank-and-file and other interested people of the decision of the meeting, a mass gathering was called for the 29th.

The decision to call a general strike vote in sympathy with Winnipeg was the final straw for The Leader. As a rule that organ was quite sympathetic to organized labour, giving reasonably fair coverage to union affairs. Even when a general strike vote had been taken earlier in the month it offered no adverse criticism because the issue was local in nature. However, it argued, to go out in sympathy with Winnipeg was uncalled for. "No usurpation of the rights and powers of civic government will be tolerated in Regina. There will be no recognition of "permits" from any strike committee to do business

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[7] Ibid., May 27, 1919, p. 9.

in this city. There will be nothing even resembling a soviet created here. Law and order will be maintained and, the strikers to the contrary nowithstanding, the business of the community will go on."[8]

The Leader visualized the complete breakdown of civil authority in Winnipeg. Later editorials condemned the leaders of organized labour for attempting to foist the same on Regina. Continual reference was made to the One Big Union, to which all the union leaders allegedly adhered and which they were attempting to force upon the whole country with the general strike. Repeated reference was made to the "doctrine of the Russian Bolsheviki" which refused to recognize labour-management co-operation.

> ...they opposed all bargaining, and are out to destroy the whole industrial, financial and governmental institutions of Canada, including the present system of labor unions and to establish a system, or rather lack of system, which prevails in Bolshevist Russia today.
>
> The sympathetic strike is being called in Regina to express approval of and give support to this program of the Reds, who, unfortunately, have secured the upper hand in Winnipeg labor circles.
>
> If the present general strike movement succeeds, then organized labor unions as now constituted and managed will be destroyed and the One Big Union will triumph and have all labor and the community at its mercy. 9

Despite such bitter criticism, the executive of Trades Council believed that the issue at stake in Winnipeg was the principle of collective bargaining, and with it a living wage; and that if the strike was defeated in Winnipeg organized labour throughout Western Canada would suffer. This sentiment was expressed repeatedly at a

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[8] Editorial entitled "At the Parting of the Ways", Ibid.

[9] Editorial entitled "The Real Issue", Ibid., May 30, 1919, p. 4.

mass meeting of the city's workers on May 27th. The large assembly hall in the Labor Temple was packed with upwards of 150 enthusiastic workers and apprehensive bystanders. With Trades Council president Heseltine in the chair, Joe Sambrook read telegrams from Calgary, Brandon and Saskatoon explaining the situation in those centres. On this occasion the Winnipeg representative was a machinist by the name of Collins and he began the discussion by outlining the steps taken to maintain law and order there. He was followed by Heseltine, Dan McDonald (machinist from the C.N.R. shops), Alderman Perry, Frank Redman (Postal Employees) and Sambrook. Several sarcastic jibes were directed at the Rotarians for volunteering to carry on "business as usual" in the event of a strike, at the local ministerial association for voicing opposition to labour's decision, and at the "Magna Charta" of the Winnipeg Committee of 1000. Each remark was greeted with a round of applause, thereby helping to arouse enthusiasm and stimulate participation. When the main subject was brought forward, not a dissenting vote was heard against helping Winnipeg to the limit.[10]

As soon as word got around of the results of the mass meeting, speculation began to mount. Some of the citizenry, in attempting to piece together a picture of the strike situation in Winnipeg from press releases, felt that a horde of long-bearded Bolsheviks and "Wobblies" would descend on their beloved city. Their fears of Bolshevism were intensified by publicity given in The Leader to alleged I.W.W. activities--burning elevators at Leader, Saskatchewan and causing a train wreck at

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[10] Ibid., May 28, 1919, pp. 9, 11.

Swift Current.[11] Other people gifted with more perception speculated as to which unions would walk out when the time came, because at that time only the I.B.E.W. and the bricklayers had committed themselves to the strike, whereas the Regina Typographical Union and the firemen had aligned themselves against such action. The local Council of Women volunteered to maintain essential public services alongside the Rotarians. Mayor Black was authorized by City Council to take "the necessary steps to maintain law and order to protect the lives and property of the citizens, to continue the operation of the vital utilities and to ensure an adequate supply of necessary food commodities...."[12] A resolution favouring law and order was passed by the Great War Veterans' Association.

Early the next morning (the 28th) a mass meeting of interested citizens was called to order in City Hall auditorium with close to 500 people present. Several prominent individuals rose and spoke on the labour situation, condemning sympathetic strikes and urging moderation by all sides. In order to prevent the chaotic situation which was thought to exist in Winnipeg, a citizens' committee of 350 was formed and five Citizens' Executive Strike Committees were appointed to co-ordinate the activities of the larger group. All were drawn from business and professional ranks. Those of note on the Executive Committees included J.F. Bole, president of the Regina Trading Company, G.S. Gamble, manager of Northern Trust Company, the Rev. Dr. Stapleford,

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[11] Ibid., May 23 and 30, 1919.

[12] Ibid., May 28, 1919, pp. 9, 11.

President of Regina College, Major George Whitmore of Whitmore Bros. (Coal Dealers), and the Rev. Dr. Milliken, pastor of Metropolitan Methodist Church.[13] To aid the work of the committees, a financial committee was set up to collect $100.00 from each of those who had volunteered support for the citizens' committee.[14]

Those who expected a reaction from the local unions on the strike referendum commensurate with the response expressed at this mass meeting on the 27th must have been disappointed. Although the majority in favour of strike action was reported to be two to one, only eleven of the twenty-five locals affiliated with the Council had voted in favour of a strike, while five had voted against and nine were undecided.[15] When compared with the strike vote taken ten days earlier in which the result had been over nine to one in favour of a strike, it can be seen that interest in a general strike was waning. Thus, after lengthy discussion on the strike committee report, it was decided by those present at the special Council meeting on May 28, to withhold action until June 2, at which time a decision would be made. The mass meeting which was to have been held the following evening was cancelled. In the meantime, the ballot committee was ordered to collect those ballots which had not been returned and those unions which had already voted were to be given a chance to reconsider.[16] Also, letters were

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[13] The Leader went to the trouble of publishing the names of all those who had signed up for membership in the Citizens' Committee. Ibid., May 29, 1919, pp. 9, 11.

[14] R.T. & L.C. files, Copy of the letter from the Finance Committee of the Citizens' Committee requesting financial aid to the amount of $100.00, May 31, 1919.

[15] The Morning Leader, May 30, 1919, pp. 9, 11.

[16] R.T. & L.C. Minutes, May 28, 1919 meeting.

written to the leaders of all levels of government, urging them to have the Winnipeg situation settled immediately.

The attitude of the executive was suddenly compromising. The lack of enthusiasm among the city's locals as shown by the referendum, coupled with the surprisingly strong stand taken by the business and professional community, knocked the wind out of the sails of those who expected a wave of public support. A letter from Joe Sambrook on behalf of the strike committee to Mayor Black mirrors this new spirit of compromise.

> We believe that if this strike /in Winnipeg/ is allowed to continue and spread, many other issues...will become issues in the contest and a settlement will become immensely more difficult. Settled Industrial peace can never be obtained untill /sic/ these problems have been justly settled, but disposing of the present immediate trouble will make possibly /sic/ a more orderly dealing with the other less pressing matters; The present purpose of the strikes outside Winniepeg /sic/ is to bring pressure to bear on the employing interests whom /sic/, we consider are refusing the just demands of the workers, and if equal pressure can be created by other means than a sympathetic strike in Regina this committee is of the opinion that such action will be preferred by the workers. We therefore wish to place before the City Council a request that they will immediately use all their influence with the Government of Canada to make 8 hours the legal working day and to compel employers to deal with workmen in such organizations as the workers themselves consider best suited to their needs....
>
> While our Bros. in Winniepeg /sic/ are in difficulties we feel that we cannot remain inactive, but if this Council will immediately take vigorous steps of the nature requested and keep us informed of their progress this committee would be glad to co-operate in the hope of obtaining a settlement and avoiding any drastic action being taken in this City.[17]

This was a radical departure indeed for a group which had stated only three days before that it was "in full accord with the aims and objects

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[17] R.T.& L.C. files. J. Sambrook to the Mayor and City Council, May 30, 1919.

of the Winniepeg /sic/ workers, and that we immediately set the machinery in operation to bring to a successfull /sic/ issue a sympathetic strike in the City of Regina...."[18]

The change in attitude was undoubtedly greeted with some relief by most of the local citizens, but by none more than by those unionists who opposed a general strike. Even the locals which had voted for strike action had either done so by only a small majority or by making any action conditional on such things as permission from their international. For example, among the bricklayers the referendum had only passed by a small majority, while the stage hands voted unanimously in favour, provided that their counterparts in other western centres walked out.[19] Similarly, the Regina local of the I.B.E.W. couched its acceptance in so many conditional clauses that it could not be depended upon. In the face of such growing opposition, even the most resolute unionists began to lose their resolve and a growing body began to express the opinion that Heseltine should resign.[20] The result was that the Trades and Labor Council washed its hands of the whole matter when the strike again came up for discussion on June 2nd.

The in camera meeting on that date was boycotted by the majority of the delegates, which was indicative of the prevalent feeling, and

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[18] Ibid., J. Sambrook to all organized labour, May 28, 1919.

[19] The Morning Leader, June 2, 1919, p. 4.

[20] Ibid.

those who were present got the business at hand completed with a minimum of discussion. The resolution finally accepted stated that "this Council having provided for the taking of a strike vote of all affiliated Unions do now withdraw from action therewith; and that the committee be discharged and all information re the sympathetic strike be handed to the Unions interested."[21] The meeting ended with a vote of confidence in Heseltine who by that time was perhaps questioning his own wisdom in having beaten the drum for a general strike.

In an editorial on June 4th, The Leader lauded the Council for not allowing the "control and direction of organized labor in Regina /to pass/ into the hands of the extremists who favor the program of the Red leaders in Winnipeg and elsewhere."[22] Then, in a pompous manner, the editorial expounded on the role of the Trades Council.

> Councils were organized throughout the cities of Canada for the avowed intention and purpose of providing a forum for the discussion of labor and social questions of common interest to all workers. But it was not originally intended that such Trades Councils should exercise legislative jurisdiction and actual control over the various craft unions which might affiliate with it /sic/. Certainly it was never intended that individual labor unions should be subject to the order of the Trades Councils. Above all, it was not contemplated that any Trades Council should even assume to tell a union that it should go on strike, much less order it to do so....

However, The Leader failed to take cognizance of the fact that, to some extent at least, the Council's decisions had been carried forward on a large wave of enthusiasm and support from most of the city's unions. Granted, this initial enthusiasm to back Winnipeg to the limit was to

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[21] R.T. & L.C. Minutes, June 2, 1919 meeting.

[22] The Morning Leader, June 4, 1919, p. 4.

some extent moulded by the so-called radicals like Heseltine, Sambrook, Kinsella and McDonald, but the reaction to their ideas would have been negative if the situation had not demanded a radical solution.

Although the Council dissociated itself from the idea of a sympathetic strike at the June 2 meeting, a provisional strike committee representing those groups which still felt strongly about a strike was formed after the meeting, with D.J. McDonald as its spokesman. Some workers, without the sanction of their unions and estimated to number less than 200, walked out on the morning of the 3rd.[23] Although attempts were made to persuade others to join them, these seem to have been unsuccessful. Made up predominantly of building labourers, a few electricians, and some C.N.R. shopmen, the strikers stayed out for a while but most straggled back to work within the next few days.[24] The attempt at a sympathetic strike in Regina ended with rather less gusto than was evident when the idea was first formulated.

The appeal from Winnipeg for a sympathetic strike met with somewhat more success in Saskatoon, but even there the final result did not meet initial expectations. Within a week of the announcement of a strike in Winnipeg a strike referendum among the city's unions was requested. As in Regina, the responsibility was taken by the Trades and Labor Council. At a meeting on the 22nd, a decision was made to take a strike vote with the returns to be in by the evening of the 27th. A Central Strike Committee was formed and stationery was printed.

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[23] Ibid., June 3, 1919, p. 9.

[24] Ibid., June 4, 1919, pp. 9, 11.

The returns from the vote in Saskatoon showed that eleven locals were willing to walk out, and all eleven adhered to their decision the following day at noon. The principal strikers included the carpenters, the C.N.R. yardmen, the railway carmen, the motion picture operators, the machinists, the musicians, the teamsters, and all the members of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees. In order to maintain some degree of public sympathy, however, the Strike Committee ordered some men back to work. The teamsters, for instance, were instructed to continue delivery of water to outlying areas of the city and the musicians, motion picture operators, and stage hands were requested "to take up their work of keeping the people cheerful."[25] Garbage collection was not provided for and the Committee requested that the City Council and the Health Department instruct the citizens to burn their own. The City Council pleaded with some of the unions to honour their contracts with the City. The workers in the power house responded by expressing doubt about strike action. As for the rest of the labour force, the waiters and cooks were still at work; the postal workers and the retail clerks' association remained undecided; the commercial telegraphers, C.P.R. freight handlers, and the Dominion Express Employees were still on the job, as were the printers, pressmen and firefighters.[26] The civic employees refused to walk out and the

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[25] R.T. & L.C. files. W.Mill (secretary Saskatoon Central Strike Committee) to R.T. & L.C., May 30, 1919. The following is a detailed breakdown of the unions which went on strike on the 28th: Plumbers and Steamfitters (with non-union helpers), 27; Carpenters, 75; C.N.R. Federated Trades (with non-union labourers), 135; Railway Carmen, 120; Painters, 17; Motion Picture Operators and Stage Hands, 26; Machinists from the City's contract shops, 97; Musicians, 35; Canadian Express Employees and Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, 138; Teamsters and Chauffeurs, 100; Steam and Operating Engineers, (no figures).

[26] The Morning Leader, May 28, 1919, p. 9.

street railway operators received a time extension to take another vote.

On the 29th further impetus was given to the strike when it spread to the Canadian Pacific shops in Sutherland. A number of men walked out but the end result was disappointing because they returned to work a few hours later.[27] That same day the postal employees and street car operators reached a decision and walked out, followed by thirty-four C.P.R. freight handlers. Thus, by the evening of the 29th, when J.S. Woodsworth spoke to a packed house in the old Daylight Theatre on behalf of the Winnipeg strikers the strike in Saskatoon was of almost general proportions, a few isolated unions concentrated predominantly in the printing trades and among the civic employees being the exception.

Little public interest was manifested in the strike, except that the unusually large number of idle men walking the streets were watched with some curiosity. The days were warm and there was little need to man the street cars with volunteers. Light and water service was still being continued. Though mail delivery had stopped and the telegraph operators refused to relay news of the strike, contact with the outside world was maintained by long-distance telephone service. All remained relatively quiet and there seemed to be no real reason for the establishment of citizens' committees. Only the business community expressed irritation at the dislocation of mail service and some threatened to act as strike breakers.[28] This proved unnecessary, however, because

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[27] Ibid., May 30, 1919, p. 11.

[28] Ibid., p. 9.

the Postmaster General presented an ultimatum to the Saskatoon postal employees on the 29th, threatening to fire all those who did not return to work within twenty-four hours,[29] but such a return would have had little effect as the railway mail service had stopped. Nevertheless, the next day thirty-one of the one hundred inside workers at the post office heeded the threat and returned to their duties.[30] However, most of the citizens patiently awaited the return of a fact-finding mission from Winnipeg.

On the 28th a deputation of "interested citizens had been formed under the auspices and with the financial support of City Council to visit Winnipeg and ascertain the following:

> (a) The true facts in relation to the strike of employees in Winnipeg;
> (b) The true facts of the conduct of the strike;
> (c) What action, if any, was being taken to bring about a satisfactory settlement of the differences between employees and employers. 31

The Trades Council had been invited to place a member on the delegation, as had the individual unions. The Firefighters and Electrical Workers accepted the invitation but the Council refused, calling the delegation merely a "Joy Ride" designed "to gain time for the City for the ostensible reason of finding out, what we already knew, through Brother Collins...."[32]

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[29] P.E. Blondin to H.T. Bushby, May 29, 1919, reprinted in Ibid., p. 11.

[30] Ibid., May 31, 1919, p. 12.

[31] The delegation as finally constituted was composed of Mayor MacMillan, T.A. Lynd, J.C. Thompson, C.W. Bolton, J.H. Lathy, W.S. Fyfe and A. Higgin. Ibid., June 3, 1919, p. 9.

[32] R.T. & L.C. files. W. Mill to R.T. & L.C., May 30, 1919.

The delegation left Saskatoon on the evening of the 28th and upon arriving in Winnipeg held a busy round of talks with the various groups and individuals. To be interviewed were the Central Strike Committee, the Citizens' Committee, Senator Robertson (the Minister of Labour), the Superintendent and members of the Hospital Board, Manitoba Premier Norris, and C.F. Gray, the Mayor of Winnipeg. Upon their return on June 1, they presented a report containing almost exactly what the Trades and Labor Council expected. While playing down the issues of collective bargaining, the eight hour day, and a living wage as incidental, the report selectively chose several inflammatory statements made by members of the Winnipeg Strike Committee as being indicative of a deeper meaning behind the strike, a meaning which the delegation felt had been best expressed by Senator Robertson and which they quoted in their conclusion.

> ...events have proved conclusively that the motive behind the general strike effect was for the purpose of gaining control of and direction of industrial affairs; also municipal, provincial and federal activities so far as they were being carried on in this city, and with the avowed intention of extending that control to a wider field.
>
> I have no hesitation in stating that the One Big Union movement is the underlying cause of the whole trouble and that the Winnipeg general strike deserves no sympathy or support from labor organizations outside. 33

With the tabling of this report, the Central Strike Committee of Saskatoon condemned the delegation for not leaving with an open mind.

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33 The Morning Leader, June 3, 1919, p. 9.

To show its disapproval of the conclusions reached, the Committee attempted a "get tough" policy by ordering the withdrawal of even the minimal services previously provided and by calling all remaining unions to walk out. The cooks and waiters responded immediately and the powerhouse employees were expected to follow.[34] The telegraphers, telephone operators and the printing trades remained adamant in their opposition. Some further invonvenience resulted and, to reduce this, twenty-four returned soldiers were hired at the Post Office as strike breakers. But the Committee realized that their "get tough" policy would prove unsuccessful as more and more citizens and rank-and-file unionists began to believe that the conclusions reached by the delegation had been correct and that the Committee was composed of a bunch of power-hungry revolutionaries. The result was that groups of workers began to return to work without the Committee's permission. Finally, the Strike Committee ordered the two most militant unions--the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America No. 615 and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen and Helpers, No. 455--to return to work on June 7 and June 10 respectively.[35] The Strike Committee ceased to exist soon after.

Surprisingly enough, the smallest union centre in Saskatchewan, Prince Albert, was the one that hung on longest in striking sympathetically with Winnipeg. Beginning with the Trades Council meeting on

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., June 9 and June 11, 1919.

May 25th, interest in a sympathetic strike began to mount. At that meeting a show of hands indicated that the majority favoured a strike. The next day the employees in the C.N.R. shops formed a committee to deal with all matters pertaining to the proposed strike. On the 27th the boilermakers and machinists walked out and all indications pointed to a general strike in that railway union town. (In 1920, seven of the eleven unions in Prince Albert were connected with the railways.)[36] By the 30th, the strikers had been joined by the railway mail clerks, the freight handlers, and express employees.[37] However, the strike could not become general because the town's local of the I.T.U. (No.705) took the international's traditional stand on sympathetic strikes. As a result, the situation remained stalemated and those who were on strike were simply content to sit back and watch developments. The city was small enough and had so little industry that slight inconvenience was felt. The pace of life was slowed down as shippers had to load and unload their own freight,[38] but only the lack of mail service was seriously felt. The strike seemed to be more like a holiday than anything else. One by one the unions returned to work, the expressmen in the week of June 15, and the shopmen on the 22nd. All were reinstated by the division superintendent without discrimination.[39]

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[36] Ibid., May 28, 1919, p. 11.

[37] Ibid., May 30, 1919, p. 11.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., June 24, 1919, p. 3.

In contrast to the rather insignificant but conscientious effort on the part of the unionists in Prince Albert was that of their fellows in the bastion of Saskatchewan unionism, Moose Jaw, where some sound and fury were expressed but the idea of a sympathetic strike never left the ground. Caught up in a wave of enthusiasm to do something for their striking brothers in Winnipeg, a boisterous group of delegates to the Trades and Labor Council gave vocal support to a general strike at a meeting on May 26th and all indications pointed to a general walkout by the 30th or 31st.[40] When the returns from a strike referendum were presented to the Council, however, they revealed anything but such exuberant unanimity among the general membership. Of 2,200 unionists in Moose Jaw, only 524 (from fifteen locals) expressed a willingness to strike. Of these, 150 made their acceptance conditional on one of two provisions: the railway trades must walk out first and all the unions must participate in the strike.[41] The most adamant supporters of immediate action were the civic employees, the firefighters and those employed in the locomotive shops.[42]

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[40] Ibid., May 30, 1919, p. 8.

[41] Ibid., June 6, 1919, p. 9.

[42] Ibid., May 30, 1919, p. 10. Those unions which voted against a strike included the following: Freighthandlers, Barbers, Electrical Workers and the employees of the Robin Hood flour mill. Those for: Machinists, Civic Employees, Fire Fighters, Boilermakers, Plumbers, Carpenters, Meat Cutters, Railway Carmen, Dominion Express Employees, Machinists' Helpers and Federated Shop Trades. The Letter Carriers and Bricklayers did not vote.

The delegates who assembled to view the results of the referendum at a special meeting of Trades Council on the 29th were not as sure of themselves as they had been three days earlier. Initially, a large body of opinion favoured sending an ultimatum to the Federal Government to settle the Winnipeg strike immediately; but as debate wore on, opinions tended to mellow and the delegates began to doubt the wisdom of strike action, especially in the light of the questionable rank-and-file support. But the most influential voice of moderation came from outside the Council.

Moose Jaw's "Mr. Union," W.G. Baker (organizing delegate for the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and the labour candidate in the 1917 provincial election), had just returned from viewing the Winnipeg situation on behalf of his Brotherhood, and he persuaded the Council to adopt a wait and see policy. Baker stated that he had gone to Winnipeg with his mind made up that the only possible solution to the situation was strike action. But after interviewing the strike committee, civic and provincial officials and Senator Robertson, he strongly advised that a strike decision in Moose Jaw would be a mistake.[43] His reasons are not known, but considering the fact that Baker was also one of Moose Jaw's most conservative unionists, he was probably influenced greatly by Robertson's contention that the Winnipeg strike was the result of a seditious plot.

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[43] Ibid.

Whatever the reasons for his opinion, however, Baker did inject moderation into the meeting and it was decided that no action would be taken until a fact-finding committee of five, elected that evening by the Council, reported back from Winnipeg. Those chosen included Trades Council President Watson, James McAllister (Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, No. 521), McKinnon, Hughes and Haight. (The last three the writer has been unable to identify.) The delegation was later enlarged to include Council Vice-President and Secretary W.H. Stephenson. The Moose Jaw City Council offered to defray part of the expenses of the trip in hopes of preventing a strike.[44]

Although the City Council showed itself willing to co-operate with the Moose Jaw Trades Council in preventing a strike, its members showed that they did not have complete confidence in the wisdom of the city's unionists by forming an emergency committee on May 28, to act in the event of a general strike. Formed with the expressed intention of co-ordinating the operation of the city's utilities, the committee included Mayor Hamilton, Aldermen Hodge, Jackson and McIntyre and City Commissioner G.D. Mackie.[45] But the Committee never had the opportunity to show its co-ordinating ability because strike action grew less likely as the days wore on, as rank-and-file support further decreased and even the leaders began to have doubts.[46]

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[44] Ibid., May 31, 1919, p. 12 and The Daily News, May 30, 1919, p. 3.

[45] The Daily News, May 29, 1919, p. 5.

[46] The Morning Leader, June 6, 1919, p. 9.

Another attempt was made by those who still advocated strike action to inject a little backbone into the city's unionists at a meeting on June 4th, but this was of no avail as support slipped past the point of no return and strike action was left to the individual unions. Some sheet metal workers and tinsmiths did walk out, but the issue of higher wages was strictly a local one. This was also the case with the street railway operators, who walked out for higher wages and shorter hours after several months of negotiations had failed to result in agreement.[47]

The rather feeble attempts to launch sympathetic strikes in various union centres in Saskatchewan have been dealt with separately for a specific reason. Even though distances between the cities (forty miles between Regina and Moose Jaw and 160 miles between Regina and Saskatoon) were not exceedingly great, and although there was telephone, telegraph and mail service there was a noticeable lack of contact between their trades councils. This deficiency was especially evident in respect to person-to-person contact, which had been shown to be extremely important in that it made it possible for the strike leaders in Winnipeg to prosecute a reasonably universal work stoppage. This lack of personal contact made the co-ordination of activities virtually impossible in Saskatchewan. In addition, it was not only necessary for Saskatchewan unionists to co-ordinate activities between their own trades councils but also with the council in Winnipeg in order to be successful. Yet both these essentials

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47 For the Street Railway Operators' demands see Ibid., June 3, 1919, p. 15.

were lacking, partly because "authentic news of the situation obtaining in other cities"[48] was conspicuous in its absence. One hand did not know what the other hands were doing--whether the other centres were pursuing a strike policy strenuously or had given up. The only news unionists thought they could depend on came from the roving disciples from Winnipeg, and their reports tended to be as exaggerated as those gleaned from the newspapers. Yet, in spite of this crippling limitation union leaders in the province thought they could conduct a strike of the proportions of Winnipeg's.

The lack of authentic information had a second telling effect on the sympathetic strikes in Saskatchewan. When the initial bravado had given way to the necessity to wait for further developments, doubt began to increase as to the wisdom of strike action. There was no necessity for those who opposed the strike to divide in order to conquer. All that was necessary was to state that the strike in Winnipeg or in some other city was failing due to the lack of public support or for some other reason. Thus, except for the leadership, the principles which were alleged to be at stake in Winnipeg were not the primary cause of some unions turning to strike action; the real motive was the redress of local grievances. For example, the Electrical Workers in Regina strenuously advocated a strike because their local was having trouble with its negotiations at the time, while the I.B.E.W. local in Saskatoon was content to remain at work.

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[48] R.T. & L.C. files. W. Mill to R.T. & L.C., May 30, 1919.

Another reason for failure which follows logically is the very evident lack of communication between union leaders and the rank-and-file. In nearly all cases the delegates to the various Trades and Labor Councils emphatically supported strike action but when the issue was brought to a vote within the local the result was quite different. In other cases, as with the periodic mass meetings that were called and where a mere show of hands was all that was necessary, there was near unanimity as the average unionist was caught up in the excitement of the occasion. However, when it came to striking in support of the struggle for a principle in a city over 400 miles away, the parochially-minded unionist in many cases refused rather than be out of pocket. On the other hand, if the principle was at stake in their own city, as with the carpenters' dispute in Regina in the middle of May, a larger body of support was evident. Only the locals of the I.T.U. and some of the railway brotherhoods voted against a strike as a matter of principle.

After seeing that the attempts at sympathetic strike action were almost farcical in some cases, it is easy to say with the benefit of hindsight that strike action, no matter where, was the wrong policy to adopt as it greatly depreciated the public image of trade unionism without accomplishing the desired end. If union leaders in all cities including Winnipeg had had the foresight to visualize the eventual consequences, a less rash and impetuous course might have been followed, and consequently a successful settlement might have been reached in Winnipeg which would

have been beneficial to labour generally. As far as cities outside of Winnipeg were concerned, perhaps more emphasis should have been placed on mobilizing public opinion behind the Winnipeg strikers by the use of press releases, informative meetings and advertising campaigns instead of attempting to use coercion. As it was, even the threat of a sympathetic strike confirmed the revolutionary motives of labour in the minds of many common citizens.

Whatever the merits of the Winnipeg strike and its repercussions in Saskatchewan it marks, along with the rise of the One Big Union movement, the end of a period of industrial unrest unequalled in Canada up to that time. Whether the One Big Union would have succeeded in organizing western unionists along industrial lines had it not been for the strike is difficult to say, but the fact remains that together they bred a feeling of suspicion of any proposed innovation among both the rank-and-file unionist and the public at large. This was probably one of the chief reasons for shelving plans to form a Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. The initial proposal for a federation came early in 1920 from the Saskatchewan executive of the Trades and Labor Congress,[49] the body it was intended to succeed, but the proposal was unceremoniously dropped in May because of a lack of interest. Although the idea was sound, and would have meant more effective united action on the part of Saskatchewan unionists, many undoubtedly believed that if a federation were marked by the radicalism that had emanated from the Alberta and

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[49] Ibid., J. Somerville (chairman Saskatchewan executive of the T.L.C.) to all unions and councils, Jan. 28, 1920.

British Columbia federations the previous year, they did not want any part of it.

In an attempt to erase memories of the past the trade union movement suddenly became conservative. The delegate to the Regina Trades and Labour Council from the Board of Trade, who had been unceremoniously dismissed on June 9, 1919 at the height of the strike, was asked to return with somewhat more dignity on January 26, 1920.[50] Also, shortly after the dust of the strike had cleared the Council purged its entire executive, which it thought to be responsible for labour's rather bad showing in the past few months. Whereas elections to the executive had previously been held in the early part of each year, the "pole-axing" ceremony took place at the end of August with A.E. Stirling (Painters and Decorators) replacing Ralph Heseltine as President, and Neil Comeau (Carpenters) replacing Joe Sambrook as recording secretary.[51] From that point on debate was more orderly, and the Council's correspondence was more sedate, lacking the verve and sarcasm which characterized Sambrook's writing. It is significant to note that at that same meeting the Council's allegiance to the Trades and Labor Congress was reaffirmed by a vote of 25 to 1, while on a motion by Sambrook that the One Big Union be discussed at a later date only seven delegates bothered to vote.

After cleaning out the radicals from its executive, the Council attempted further to enhance its image in the eyes of the Congress and

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[50] R.T. & L.C. Minutes, June 9, 1919 and Jan. 26, 1920 meetings.

[51] Ibid., Aug. 25, 1919 meeting.

the internationals by attempting to cast out all delegates who maintained memberships in the One Big Union. The result of this action led to a five month running battle with the Bricklayers', Masons' and Plasterers' International Union No. 1 (formerly the Bricklayers' and Masons' International Union) which eventually led to the disaffiliation of the union from the Council. Early in March the bricklayers had elected Sambrook, J.W. Smith Eddy, D. Puddephat and J. Farmer as their delegates to the Council. The Council executive held that all were enrolled on the books of the O.B.U.; as a result they were not bona fide international members and therefore were not eligible for membership on the Council. After lengthy debate through His Majesty's mail and in joint committees the local still held its ground and eventually withdrew.[52] Similar proceedings were attempted against Fred Kinsella of the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders No. 205, but when the union proved that he was not a member of the O.B.U. he was allowed to sit.[53]

Another attempt by the Regina Council to cleanse its soul of the past was made in relation to the committee established to raise funds and moral support for the defense of those arrested for their actions in the Winnipeg General Strike. Almost as if any contact with Winnipeg, no matter how tenuous, would be the final kiss of death, the Council showed definite hesitation in giving financial aid.[54] The reason given

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[52] See R.T. & L.C. files for all correspondence pertaining to this subject.

[53] R.T. & L.C. files. A. Stewart to Comeau, May 18, 1920.

[54] R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Nov.10, 1919 meeting.

was that "protesting against authority would be of no use."[55] The Council did subscribe for $100 worth of bonds which the Winnipeg Defense Committee was attempting to dispose of in order to aid those on trial. However, it refused to make an outright donation, and even then it was very quick to jump on the Defense Committee for alleged irregularities in the disposal of its funds.[56] The attitude adopted by the Council toward the Winnipeg strike leaders seemed to reflect an attempt to wash its hands of all that had taken place only a few months before. However, when it was faced with the necessity of doing something a resolution expressing sympathy was passed.

> Resolved that the R. & L. Council of Regina are of the opinion that the men on trial in Winnipeg are being persecuted for the actions of organized labor of Canada and not for actions for which they are individually responsible we feel that the T. & L. Congress of Canada should take the nececary /sic/ steps to bring the most powerful influences to bear wherever possible to the end that these men may be relieved of the persecution they are undergoing in the cause of organized labour. 57

However, there was no desire expressed to bring the Council's own "influences to bear."

No matter how hard organized labour in Saskatchewan tried to break with the past, however, the situation still remained confused. As W.R. Trotter, then secretary of the Federated Labor Party, sympathetically stated, "Sorry to hear that labor affairs are in the same muddle in Regina

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55 R.T. & L.C. files. Comeau to E. Robinson (secretary Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council), Feb. 24, 1920.

56 Ibid., R.T. & L.C. to J. Law (secretary Winnipeg Defense Committee), Feb. 24, 1920.

57 R.T. & L.C. Minutes, Jan. 26, 1920 meeting.

as everywhere in Western Canada for the time being."[58] The legacy of 1919 was a disrupting influence of the first magnitude. A number of locals affiliated with the One Big Union still remained, and although an increasing number of its members were growing disillusioned and were returning to the internationals, the lines for the great debate of the next two decades over the respective merits of industrial unionism and craft unionism had been firmly established. Even though the majority of unionists had returned to established forms, there remained the gnawing doubt in the minds of those who thought about such things that the One Big Union, or some variation of it, had been given a fair trial. But in the immediate post-1919 period even the established order, in its efforts to accomplish the necessary organization, had trouble overcoming the lethargy and fear in the minds of all workers, whether organized or not. The Western Canadian organizer for the Retail and Wholesale Clerks, Shippers and Warehouse Men's Association, W.H. Hoop, described the situation in the following manner.[59]

> Our Head Office have /sic/ decided that for a time the Canadian International Officer must needs remain off the road. The Reason /sic/ given is that owing to the general unrest and the consequent lack of interest in organization work especially in our line, they have for the time being spent as much money and time, as the International can afford until there is some sign that the O.B.U. and other agences /sic/ which have acted detremental /sic/ have been overcome. Personally I know that the /International/ Office are fully justified in their action, in that especially in the West where we have laboured to establish Locals and obtain for them the Half holiday as well as other improvements the clerks

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[58] R.T. & L.C. files. W.R. Trotter to Comeau, Jan. 22, 1920.

[59] Ibid., W.H. Hoop to Comeau, Jan. 8, 1920.

> have remained somewhat indifferent and the troubles of our movement in general have helped to produce lethargy.

He still expressed some optimism about the future, however.

> In the meantime we are just giving the International Spirit a big boost forward, and there is little doubt in my mind that in a few months the O.B.U. spirit will be a thing of the past. The T. & L.C. /in Winnipeg/ had a very fine meeting Tue. night all the old fire was in evidence, and when the trial is over there will be a comple/te/ showdown only because the interest of the accused men are /sic/ at stake do we desire to wait, afterwards the real move forward will be began /sic/.

Impatience with the present but hope for the future was the feeling expressed at the beginning of 1920. Yet the situation following the industrial unrest of 1919 was not completely black. Also, the formation of the One Big Union and the rash of strikes which punctuated the war years and immediate post-war period were a logical outcome of the political and economic situation and therefore must not be condemned too strenuously. Under the circumstances, which have been dealt with in detail, it was almost inevitable that unionists would consider anything that might offer relief--be it industrial unionism or the ultimate weapon, the general strike. Although both produced as a net result deep-seated hatred and antagonism which lasted for a number of years, a rather nebulous benefit was salvaged from this period. The events of 1919 showed the general public that the trade union movement was a viable entity, capable of action which could conceivably disrupt the entire economy if conditions warranted such action. Conversely, it was realized that if the legitimate grievances of labour were removed, industrial peace was more likely to prevail.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

As in other areas, the trade union movement in Saskatchewan developed to meet the need of her working citizens for better conditions and higher wages. Only after union recognition was achieved was this accomplished with a significant degree of success. However, besides this primary aim, trade unionism in the province served a number of purposes. The union local acted as the basis for the expression of brotherhood and the satisfaction of the need for fellowship; it served as the sounding board for the discussion of new ideas and the expression of discontent; and it became the vehicle by which grievances were brought to the attention of civic and provincial authorities. These secondary aims were also accomplished with some success. Yet, to state that the movement was a vibrant, unified force during the first fifteen years of its existence would be an exaggeration. Too many forces and factors were at work causing disunity. Although there were certain general policies and attitudes which were adhered to by most unionists there was often serious disagreement on matters of detail, not only between trades but also between individuals. Attempts were made by those most deeply devoted to the cause of unionism to counteract this disunity but they met with little success. The reason for their failure lay in a combination of natural, social and economic forces too difficult to be overcome.

Weather and geographical separation constituted the main natural barriers to union development. Saskatchewan weather played havoc with union solidarity. Because the building trades were seasonal, with most

men being unemployed for at least one-third of each year, many union members would accept a non-union job out of necessity. Principle was readily set aside in order to make ends meet. In addition, the physical separation of the centres of union strength in the province added to the problems of unionization, making it difficult for unionists to get together and co-ordinate policy. Only the Saskatchewan executive of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada prevented city trades councils from becoming completely separate entities. Yet Saskatchewan unions were not able to seek effective inspiration from unionists in larger, more developed cities such as Winnipeg with more diversified industrial bases. They shared a common bond of unionism but factors such as the foregoing created a gulf difficult to bridge.

Similarly, the close urban-rural relationship, a geographical and social factor beneficial in regard to the exchange of ideas, in the end tended to make unionists less militant. In the face of adversity or unemployment the constant availability of land during the formative years made it much easier for the unionist to escape from his urban discomfort than to close ranks with his fellow workers.

The level of economic organization added its problems. The formative years of Saskatchewan unionism were the heyday of the building trades, the predominant area of trade union organization. Because men employed in the construction industry had to go where there was work they led a nomadic existence. Therefore there was never a large nucleus of individuals in any place for any length of time. Only those of executive ranks or those who had the favour of the business agent (the individual responsible for placing workers on various jobs) were able to remain

constantly in one city. The rank-and-file member had to seek his fortune elsewhere if there was no work locally. Herein lay the reason for the obvious differences of opinion between union executives and their rank-and-file on many issues.

Despite geographical isolation and the late development of labour organization in the province, Saskatchewan unionists shared the ideas and discontent sweeping the labour world, during the second decade especially. This suggests an interesting overlay of advanced ideas on a more primitive level of union organization. For a time it seemed that a new and necessary militancy had been injected, but when the discontent was manifested in a tangible form with the formation of the One Big Union, Saskatchewan unionists were unable to respond in an effective manner simply because the concept of industrial unionism was completely foreign to the internationally and craft-minded building trades. The Winnipeg General Strike brought a similar ineffective response because again the natural forces of distance and disunity combined with social and economic factors to defeat the radical, ardent faction which advocated a more advanced form of unionism.

Although the history of Saskatchewan unionism may seem like a tale of division and disillusion, there were times when it was characterized by unity and enthusiasm for new ideas. The response by Regina unionists to the strikes during the construction of the provincial Legislative Building points this out, as does the response to the carpenters' strike in May, 1919. But these were local issues. When it came to national and international matters Saskatchewan unionists, with a few exceptions, showed less interest, reflecting the parochial, isolationist attitude

which dominated the thinking of most of the province's citizens during much of the first three decades of the century.

APPENDIX A

TEXT OF RESOLUTION PASSED BY MASS MEETING AT

TRADES HALL, REGINA, January 3, 1917

"Whereas the Canadian nation is now in a state of war with the enemies of the British empire,

"And whereas the government at present directing the affairs of the nation has made an appeal to the patriotism of the manhood of the nation to sign registration cards stating their willingness to engage in other lines of work than that to which the signer is accustomed and in other parts of the country,

"And whereas the usefulness and purpose of such registration are obscure and the premier and director of National Service have failed to give satisfactory answers to questions put to them by working people in different parts of the country concerning these points,

"And whereas it is doubtful if such applications of labor could be arranged under conditions which the working people would consider fair, not only to the proposed workers, but also to the present workers whom it is proposed to crowd into the army,

"And whereas the working people of Canada have borne, are bearing, and will continue bearing the greatest burdens of the war in the shape of expenses, hardships, mutilations and death out of all proportions to the benefits they will receive therefrom,

"And whereas there are now in operation in Canada enormous industries equipped to produce war materials which are reaping profits for their owners out of all proportion to the effort put forth by the owners, and many of them operating under conditions which are doubtful or unfair to the people working in the industries,

"And whereas there is a large class of people in Canada who do not depend upon their past or present toil for their livelihood, but who receive greater benefit from a successful ending of the war than will the working people,

"And whereas there are in the civil, military and semi-military organizations of Canada many unnecessary offices, many duplications of offices and many overpaid offices, and many of the holders of these offices conduct their business with more view to the benefit of themselves than the benefit of the nation,

"And whereas the present government of Canada has grossly imposed upon the patriotism of the nation which has permitted them to continue in office under conditions far different from those for which it was elected, rather than arouse party strife in an election in war time,

"And whereas the working people of Canada are totally unrepresented in the present government by anyone holding their confidence,

"Therefore, we, the working people of the city of Regina, in mass meeting assembled, do hereby resolve:

"1. That in our opinion the working people of Canada have already made greater efforts and borne greater burdens in connection with the war than have many other classes of people in Canada.

"2. That it is unfortunate and undesirable at such a time of stress and crisis the government should allow its friends and supporters to reap great profits from a situation which is costing the lifeblood of the nation.

"3. That the working people are prepared to continue to make great efforts and bear great burdens in connection with the war, but they are not prepared to bear the double burden of the war and the profit-takers.

"4. That it is unfortunate and undesirable that, at the present time many of the officials appointed by the present government should be conducting their offices with more view to self-interest and favoritism than to the efficient conduct of the nation's business, which condition, we are informed, extends even to the National Service department.

"5. That the movement in progress under the name of National Service is incorrectly named and that the actual purpose of the movement is anything but national service.

"6. That it would be more just and more becoming for Sir Robert Borden to address his appeal for patriotism to his own friends, the financial and industrial magnates and the numerous officials to whom his government is paying large salaries.

"7. That this meeting entirely disapproves of national registration, and since Sir Robert Borden has changed his attitude on conscription since the national registration movement was inaugurated, that we withhold action until the premier comes to a settled state of mind, and that we do not sign the registration cards until such time.

"8. That it is undesirable that further power should be concentrated in the hands of a small group of men having such tendencies as those displayed by the present government.

"9. That the spirit at present developing within the government is directly opposed to the spirit of democratic government for which the constitution of Canada provides, and which is so important to the rights of the masses of people in the country.

"10. That to allow such a government as is at present in power to mobilize all of the fighting men and munition plants of the nation under its direct military control will, at the conclusion of the war, be an actual menace to the political institutions of the nation.

Asks Government to Resign.

"11. That it is desirable that honesty, efficiency and singleness of purpose be established in the nation and to that end we do here and now appeal to the patriotism of Sir Robert Borden to at once place the resignation of his government in the hands of the governor-general and advise His Excellency to call as his new advisors a government in which all classes of the nation will be represented and particularly in which the working people will have such trusted representation as their numbers and importance in the country would justify.

"12. That copies of this resolution should be sent to Sir. R. L. Borden and R. B. Bennett as our reply to their appeal for registration, and that a committee should be appointed to give the action of this meeting as great publicity as possible."

(from Regina Trades and Labor Council files)

APPENDIX B

Resolutions passed by mass meeting of workingmen in Regina, May 31, 1917.

"Resolved that the workingmen here assembled, put themselves on record as pledging their loyalty to the king and empire to the just cause of the allied peoples in their defence of the rights and liberties of the workingmen, and our pledge to support the government of Canada in their endeavor to place men in the firing line in France to defend our homes and the lives of our women and children. We hope that in this endeavor the government will take into consultation the leaders of all parties and creeds."

Resolved:

1. That steps should at once be taken to eliminate the food speculator and monopolist from the people's sources of food and to take out of their hands that which they already control.

2. That where mining and manufacturing concerns have closed their properties rather than pay their employees wages suited to the increased cost of living, their properties should be taken over by the people and operated in the public interest.

3. That the war industries, transportation systems and large food manufacturers should be taken out of private ownership and operated without profit in the public interest under the most skilful and scientific business management entirely removed from the control or influence of party politics.

4. That special privileges should be provided for all returned soldiers and not for only those who wish to settle on land.

5. That the dependents of absent soldiers should be provided for out of national funds and not left largely to a form of charity which might be discontinued.

6. That the children of fallen soldiers should be considered as wards of the nation and should be provided with the best living conditions, the best education and the best training for life which the nation provides.

7. That the dependents of private soldiers should receive allowances sufficient at least as good as they would receive if he were in private life.

8. That the uncurbed activities of profiteers and food speculators and agitation for actions contrary to democratic principles are rapidly destroying many people's interest in the prosecution of the war.

9. That the expressions of newspapers and men of the privilege classes must not be accepted as the voice of the whole nation.

10. That after the war employment cannot safely be left to be provided by private interests and individuals who will require to make a profit on all work done, but it must be largely provided by other means.

11. That any government which is lacking in sympathy with and understanding of the conditions of the working people will be totally unsuited for after the war conditions.

12. That a party government or a parliament elected on party lines is unsuited to the nation's needs at the present time.

13. That a government or any member of a government which has encouraged or countenanced profiteering and food speculation during war time is unfit to continue in authority over the Canadian people.

(The Morning Leader, June 1, 1917, p. 9.)

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